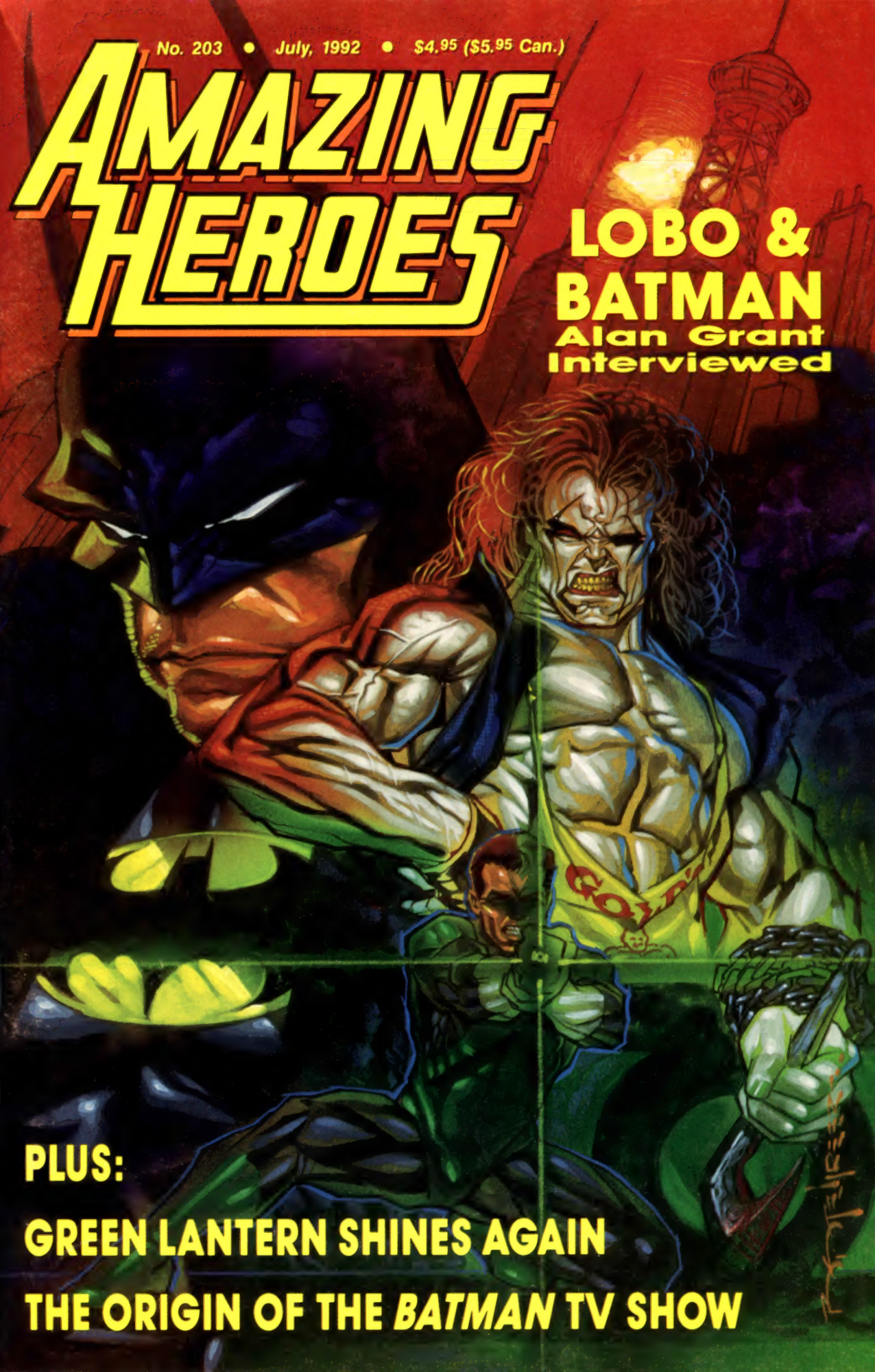
No. 203 • July, 1992 • $4.95 ($5.95 Can.)

AMAZING HEROES

LOBO & BATMAN
Alan Grant Interviewed



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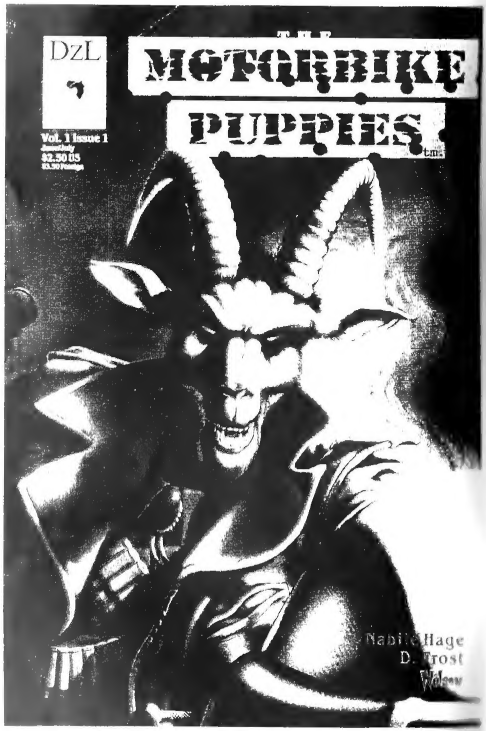

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EDITORIAL

Leftovers: Before I go, I'd like to talk about some editorial subjects I wanted to use, but never did.

I intended to spend a week following the Charles Atlas health plan, and report my findings here, but though I actually went as far as ordering the thing (a minuscule version of the ad still appears in DC comics now and then), I couldn't find the time to actually try it.

I would have liked to have parodied the current obsession with continuity by pointing out the many continuity "errors" that appear in Shakespeare and the Bible, but had neither the knowledge nor the time to catalog these great works accurately.

I wanted to devote an editorial to saying, against the growing tide of opinion in the comics community, why I think *Batman Returns* is going to be *better* than its predecessor. By the time I thought of doing it, I knew my opinions wouldn't appear before the movie itself, so it seemed pointless. What I saw as the movie's great promise was the same thing that other people saw as its great problem: that director Tim Burton managed to wrest creative control away from the producers. By the time this sees print, I'll know if I was right.

There were other ones. I wanted plead the case of retailers, who, in my opinion, get too much of the blame for the state of comic today. I wanted argue that the splintering of comics fandom into various uncompromising factions—no matter *what* they stand for—is destroying the promise of a diverse but unified comic community. I wanted to argue that maybe super-heroes aren't the most terrible thing in the world for young people to be reading.

The Wasteland: This, as you can see, is our final issue. Because I had the brilliant idea of doing it as a double "flip" issue, I also have to write two editorials.

Actually, it's probably for the best, since I feel compelled to discuss the following topic with you before I go, and it's far too nasty a subject for me to put in my "final" editorial. (To see that, turn the magazine over.)

It concerns Tundra, the marvelous new creator's rights, cutting edge company founded by Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles tycoon Kevin Eastman.

When Kim Thompson informed me of *AH*'s impending demise, he also offered me the position of editor of Fantagraphics' Eros line. Not my dream job, I'll admit, but a solid comics job in a recession. I accepted, but decided to see if anything better was available.

Actually, there were only two things I wanted to check out. One was DC, which I'm still looking at. The other was Tundra. Tundra was in my home state, looked like a progressive, adventurous publisher, and seemed to be on excellent financial ground. I called up Tundra within days of *AH*'s cancellation, and learned there was an assistant editorial position open. To my surprise, they immediately flew me in for an interview. (I work for Fantagraphics, remember. I've never even gotten bus fare from Kim and Gary.)

Well, to make a long story short, they offered me a job, and I accepted. I gave Kim notice, and proceeded to straighten out my affairs in preparation for my big move.

Five days later they backed out.

They said they figured it would be all right, since I had the Eros job lined up. I informed them that I had rejected the job, and that Kim was getting someone else. That's too bad, they replied.

In a series of phone calls to Tundra, my demeanor changed from shell-shocked to pissed. As I kept pressing for an explanation for what was going on, I got two standard answers: "This is a decision we made after much thought and consideration," and "It's a recession." It was all nonsense. Flip-flopping is not the result of much thought and consideration, and the American economy did not change that much between the Wednesday I was hired and the Monday I was screwed.

I only truly realized that I was being screwed and lied to when Susan Alston, Tundra's representative in this matter, concluded a phone call with me by warily asking if I had been recording it.

In fact, I came to see that it was Tundra's position that I *never was* hired. But Tundra called me up, offered me the job, and I accepted. I have witnesses. If I had gotten the offer in writing, Tundra could not have rescinded it without setting themselves up for a lawsuit. But there was no need to get it in writing; after all, this was Tundra, and how could the publisher that screamed "creator's rights" louder than any other be guilty of unethical employment practices?

My guess is that Tundra will say that a) they never hired me, in which case they're lying, or b) that they weren't committed to me because nothing had been put in writing, in which case, they're admitting that their word is no damn good.

I wasn't just angry that Tundra had managed to lose me two jobs in one week. I was appalled by the deceit and intimidation they stooped to in an attempt to get me out of their hair. Susan was not above questioning my ability in order to scare me off, and even accused me of showing "animosity" towards the company. I'm too old to fall for crap like that, but that does nothing to diminish my disgust at their tactics.

The final twist came a few weeks later, when a sympathetic Tundra employee called me up to say that he had gotten management to re-offer the job. The impression I got though, was that Tundra's management was doing this as a favor to this employee, not because they actually thought they did anything wrong. Even though I had no other offers at the time, the thought of working with people who were so unrepentingly deceitful nauseated me. I declined the offer.

In a way, I'm grateful that the job was re-offered. Now nobody can claim that my complaints are sour grapes from someone who missed out on a good job. If that was true, I'd be there right now. No, I'm mad at the people who run Tundra because they're careless, irresponsible, and two-faced.

The main culprit here is Kevin Eastman. I never even had a chance to speak with him throughout this charade, but when a company is as confused, untrustworthy, and fragmented as Tundra, it's a sure sign of bad management.

Kevin Eastman has obviously given a lot of thought to creator's rights, and has founded Tundra on this principle. However, Kevin seems have given no thought towards running a business competently and fairly. At best, he seems to think that money is an acceptable substitute for decent management.

The trouble with Tundra is that it is not a business. It it a very expensive toy. Someday, when Kevin grows up, it might be a real business. Until then, I suggest that whatever you do with them, for God's sake, get it in writing!

—THOMAS HARRINGTON

CONTENTS

GRANT AND RAVE 16

Judge Dredd, Batman, Lobo, Demon, L.E.G.I.O.N., The Bogie Man—How does Alan Grant find time to write all that while living a peaceful, normal life? Easy—he doesn't.

interview by Frank Plowright

3-RING CIRCUS 26

The Green Lanterns shine again in an explosion of titles at DC. Writer Gerard Jones, editor Kevin Dooley, and others tell how it happened.

feature by Darwin McPherson

ALL RIGHT, RAT! GET GOING—AND NEXT TIME DON'T COME INTO THE STUDIO WITHOUT AN INVITATION!
WHAT A MAN! THINK I'LL OFFER HIM A CONTRACT!

RAISING KANE 34

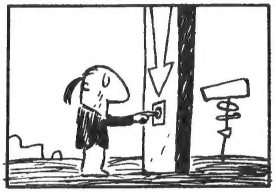
A look at the correspondence between Bob Kane and William Dozier concerning the new 1966 TV show, *Batman*.

feature by Duane S. Arniott

HEIDI AT THE HARVEYS 36

Once again, a crazed look at who might and might not win at the Harveys, courtesy of "Ace" and her special guest stars.

roundtable by Heidi MacDonald



7 **NEWSLINE** E.C. Comics magnate and *MAD* publisher William M. Gaines dies. *by Staff*

39 **"THWOCK!"** Unearthed from the Golden Age of Anvil Comics, an original Anvil Man adventure! *by Adam-Troy Castro & Chas Gillen*

43 **BACKSTAGE** The principal cast of the *Shazam!* TV show: Les Tremayne, Michael Gray, and John Davey. *by Andy Mangels*

50 **A FEW WORDS WITH . . .** Angela Bocage, a *Real Girl* if there was one. *by Jeff Lang*

54 **REVIEWS** *Hard Boiled*: the world's first three *year* egg. Jason Sacks reviews magazines about comics books. *by various*

68 **AMAZING READERS** *Readers*

72 **THE CARTOONIST** *T.S. Wood*

73 **STROM'S INDEX** *Dave Strom*

COVER BY BRIAN STELFREEZE

issue #203
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july, 1992

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NEXT ISSUE:

PAUL CHADWICK INTERVIEWED!!

Mr. MXYZPTLK HISTORY!!!

PLUS:
ADAM-TROY CASTRO, ANDY MANGELS, ANGELA BOCAGE and more!!

It's in your hands. Just turn the magazine over.

NEWSLINE

WILLIAM M. GAINES 1922-1992, PUBLISHER OF EC COMICS, *MAD* MAGAZINE

William M. Gaines, the publisher of EC Comics and *Mad* magazine, died in his sleep on June 3. He was 70 years old.

Gaines was born on March 2, 1922. Gaines' father Max was the owner of All-American Comics, Inc. which published jointly with National Periodical Publications. He is often called the founder of the modern American comic book.

In 1948, Bill Gaines, who knew almost nothing of comics, reluctantly took over his his late father's recently formed Educational Comics, which was founded after he left DC. The company was not doing well, and it was thought that it would soon fold under Bill Gaines. In early 1950, after publishing crime, love and western comics such as *Modern Love* and *Saddle Justice*, Gaines and editor Al Feldstein launched the famous EC horror and science-fiction line, changed the name of the company to Entertaining Comics, and created the most famous, controversial, and acclaimed comics of the '50s.

EC probably had the greatest pool of talent in the history of comics. Its discoveries in this period include Wally Wood, Graham Ingels, Bernie Krigstein, Al Williamson, Jack Davis, Bill Elder, and, perhaps most importantly, editor Harvey Kurtzman, who created the acclaimed EC war titles and EC's most lasting success, *Mad*.

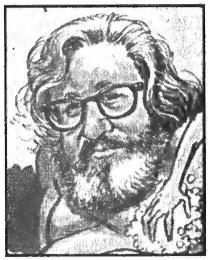
During Gaines' horror years, which he called the most rewarding period of his life, he and Feldstein concocted countless tales of violent retribution that had a lasting effect on comics and the horror genre in general. A typical tale from the period has a butcher's son poisoned to death by his father's tainted meat. In revenge, the butcher's wife murders him and sells his parts in his store.

Then Gaines became the center of the greatest controversy ever to involve comics. Dr. Fredric Wertham's anti-comic book manifesto *Seduction of the Innocent* included reproductions and synopses from several EC stories. In December 1953, a distributor refused to carry *Mad*'s companion title *Panic* #1 because of a Elder-illustrated parody of "The Night Before Christmas" which showed Gaines dressed as Santa Claus, with a "Just Divorced" bumper sticker on his sleigh.

Then, spurred on partly by Dr. Wertham, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency addressed the affect of comics on American children. Gaines was the only representative of the comics industry willing to defend comics before the Subcommittee, and his performance was sometimes eloquent, sometimes incoherent. His most famous statement from the hearings is probably, "It would be as difficult to describe the harmless thrill of a horror story to Dr. Wertham as it would to explain the sublimity of love to a frigid old maid."

Gaines called several fellow publishers to a meeting to form a comic book association, but walked out on the meeting when they voted to ban the words "crime," "horror," and "terror" from comics. The group later formed the the Comics Magazine Association, which introduced the Comics Code.

Gaines attempted to continue in the comic-book field with a series of "New Direction" titles tailor-made to conform to the Code. But these books—among them *Impact*, *Aces High*, *Valor*, *Incredible Science-Fiction* and *Psychoanalysis*—proved short-lived, and none lasted beyond seven issues. Gaines still encountered trouble with the Comics Code, culminating in the organization's refusal of a reprinted science-fiction story, "Judgment Day," on the grounds that its final panel—showing an African-American in a space suit—was offensive because of the beads of sweat on the character's forehead. Gaines cancelled the "New Direction" titles in early 1956.



Gaines in the '50s, and in a '70s vacation sketch by EC & *Mad* cartoonist Jack Davis

Gaines also attempted an ill-judged hybrid of the comic-book and "slick" magazine market with *Adult Tales of Terror Illustrated* and *Shock Illustrated*. Dubbed "Adult Illustories," these titles featured prose in the EC shock-ending tradition with spot illustrations by many EC staffers. This format failed to find an audience and the "Illustory" titles were cancelled after two issues. A third issue of *Shock* was published but withdrawn from distribution. Two hundred copies were handbound for office distribution; the book is among the most sought-after of all EC collectibles.

A wiser—and infinitely more rewarding move occurred in spring, 1955, when Gaines decided to convert *Mad*, after 23 comic-book format issues, into a black & white magazine that would allow it to dodge the pressure of the Code. The change was a success, but differences grew between Kutzman and Gaines, who replaced Kurtzman with Feldstein after #28. Feldstein introduced new artists like Don Martin, Mort Drucker, and Sergio Aragones, and *Mad* became the most successful humor magazine in America. It continues to be popular today. *Late Night With David Letterman* head writer Steve O'Donnell told *The New York Times*, "It's got to have been an influence on almost every comedy writer I know."

In a 1983 interview in *The Comics Journal*, Gaines said, "We've always published here for ourselves. . . It's a lot safer to be the other kind of publisher, but it's not as much fun." ●

NOTABLE FIGURES IN COMICS DIE: MINHINNICK, PAPP, HENDERSON, MERAZ

The deaths of four notable figures in comics were announced recently.

Sir Gordon Edward George Minhinnick

Longtime political cartoonist Sir Gordon Edward George Minhinnick, the "grand old man of New Zealand cartooning," died on February 19 at the age of 89. Minhinnick's work appeared in the New Zealand *Free Lance*, the Christchurch *Sun*, and the Aukland *Sun* before he was hired by the *New Zealand Herald* in 1930. His first *Herald* cartoon appeared on October 29, 1930, his last, on August 17, 1987.

Minhinnick's work was so well-regarded that in 1950 the *Evening Standard* of London asked him to take over the positon of the great David Low upon the latter's retirement. Minhinnick declined, saying he liked New Zealand too much to move to England. Other honors bestowed upon him included the rank of Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1950 and of Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1976.

Minhinnick's style was light and humorous most of the time, although he was occasionally grim when he felt it necessary. Said the *New Zealand Herald*: "He had the rare turn of mind that could put a comic touch even on inflamed community feelings and defuse them with a laugh." Minhinnick also wrote a number of first-rate light essays on occasion.

George Papp

The August 8, 1989 death of DC artist and Green Arrow creator George Papp has recently been confirmed. Papp, who died at the age of 73, worked at DC for over 25 years on several different characters, but his most well-known work was on Green Arrow and Superboy.

Mr. Papp began working at Detective Comics Inc. in 1939 on characters such as Pep Morgan, college athlete. In 1941, he came up with the name and concept for Green Arrow, his most famous character. Green Arrow was a modern-day Robin Hood, wearing green and using his great archery skills to promote justice. Joined by his sidekick Speedy, Green Arrow was an immediate success.

Except for time spent fighting in World War II from 1942 to 1946, Papp continued to draw Green Arrow until 1958, when he was moved to the burgeoning Superboy comic. There, together with Otto Binder and Robert Bernstein, he created the lasting characters Bizarro and Mon-El (later renamed Valor). Papp drew one last Green Arrow story, a Batman-Green Arrow team-up, in 1966 for *The Brave and the Bold*.

Papp was fired in 1967, along with Wayne Boring, George Klein, Jim Mooney, and other artists. DC editor Mort Weisinger said the firings were a result of a new policy to encourage more modern styles of drawing comics.

Papp is survived by his wife Marie of Oradell, New Jersey.

George Henderson

On February 10, "Captain" George Henderson died at Toronto Western Hospital at the age of 62. Called the "godfather of Toronto comics fandom," Henderson was a lover of pop culture who helped to establish Canada's comics industry.

Dave Meraz

Rip Off artist Dave Meraz died March 10 from drowning after falling off the cliffs at Sante Cruz, Mexico. Meraz was working on the title *Sick Tales* at the time of his death. According to Rip Off, the unfinished *Sick Tales* might eventually be finished by friends or relatives of the artist.

Born on July 17, 1966, Meraz drew constantly from the time he was a child, moving from Disney and Hanna-Barbera characters to super-heroes. "He'd literally spend hours, days, even months just working on drawing hands or fists," recalled his mother, Rosemary.

David, who often used the pen name "DM2", did the cover for the "Save the Humans" issue of *Rip Off Comics*, and did the "Werewolf on Wheels" story for the final issue of that title.

"Dave's enthusiasm was infectious," recalled Rip Off editor Kathe Todd. "He and his very sweet and pretty girlfriend drove all the way down to Auburn from Chico on his motorcycle—on a Sunday afternoon, at that—to sell us on the *Sick Tales* comic.

"His death was a shock to us at Rip Off, and it is a tragedy that his potential will never be realized. We're going to miss him."

MARVEL COMICS FOUNDER AND EX-PUBLISHER MARTIN GOODMAN DIES

Martin Goodman, founder and longtime publisher of Marvel Comics, died on June 6th at his home in Palm Beach, Florida.

Born in Brooklyn in 1910, Goodman had been fascinated with periodicals as a boy, even creating his own magazines by clipping and pasting together parts of other magazines. In 1932, he and his partner Louis Silberkleit formed Western Fiction Publishing, a pulp publishing house.

In 1939, Goodman decided to try his hand at comics. He founded Timely Comics, which at first simply published work packaged by Funnies, Inc., such as *Marvel Comics*, which introduced The Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner. Soon, however, Goodman hired his own staff, including future comic legends Joe Simon, Jack Kirby, and Stan Lee. Simon & Kirby created Captain America, who, with the Human Torch and Sub-Mariner, would be Timely's mainstay during the Golden Age.

When super-heroes faded after World War II, Goodman began publishing in every genre conceivable, including funny animal, romance, war, science fiction, teenage, humor and horror. But the '50s were generally a bad time for Timely.

In 1961, noticing DC's Silver Age super-hero revival, Goodman told editor Stan Lee, "Maybe we ought to do a team of super-heroes." Lee and Kirby proceeded to create *The Fantastic Four*. By 1963 the company (now re-named Marvel Comics) had a whole line of successful titles, such as *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *The Avengers*, and was gaining on its rival, DC Comics.

Goodman sold Marvel to Cadence Industries in 1968, staying on as publisher until 1972. He tried returning to comics in 1974 by creating Seabord Publications (Atlas Comics), but the company folded after a year. He then retired for good.

Mr. Goodman is survived by his wife, Jane, three children and six grandchildren. And a comic book company.

THE 1992 EISNER AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards, which will be presented on August 15, 1992 at this year's annual San Diego Comic Convention, are one of the comic industry's two major award ceremonies. Like the Harveys, they've been in existence since 1988. Unlike the Harveys, voters outside the creative end of the comics industry—retailers, distributors and warehouse managers—participate in the voting.

BEST SINGLE ISSUE OR STORY

AMERICAN SPLENDOR #16 by Harvey Pekar and various artists (Tundra)
"FEAR AND LOATHING ON THE BAYOU TRAIL," *Swamp Thing* #113 by Nancy Collins, Tom Yeates, and Shepherd Hendrix (DC Comics)
"THE BOOK BURNERS," *Groo the Wanderer* #78 by Sergio Aragones with Mark Evanier (Marvel/Epic)
"SEASON OF MISTS," *The Sandman* #22-28 by Neil Gaiman and various artists (DC Comics)
"SIN CITY," *Dark Horse Presents 5th Anniversary Special* and *Dark Horse Presents* #51-57, by Frank Miller (Dark Horse)

BEST CONTINUING SERIES

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK by Dave Sim and Gerhard (Aardvark-Vanaheim)
DOOM PATROL by Grant Morrison, Richard Case, and others (DC Comics)
FLAMING CARROT COMICS by Bob Burden (Dark Horse)
GROO THE WANDERER by Sergio Aragones with Mark Evanier (Marvel/Epic)
THE INCREDIBLE HULK by Peter David and Dale Keown (Marvel Comics)
LOVE AND ROCKETS by Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez (Fantagraphics Books)
MIRACLEMAN by Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham (Eclipse)
THE SANDMAN by Neil Gaiman and various artists (DC Comics)
YUMMY FUR by Chester Brown (Drawn and Quarterly)

BEST FINITE SERIES

BILLI 99 by Sarah E. Byam and Tim Sale (Dark Horse)
THE BOOKS OF MAGIC by Neil Gaiman and various artists (DC Comics)
BRAT PACK by Rick Veitch (King Hell/Tundra)
CONCRETE: FRAGILE CREATURE by Paul Chadwick (Dark Horse)
DAVID CHELSEA IN LOVE by David Chelsea (Eclipse)

BEST ANTHOLOGY

A-1 #5, Dave Elliott and Garry Leach, editors (Atomeka Press)
DARK HORSE PRESENTS, Randy Stradley, editor (Dark Horse)
RAW, vol. 2, no. 3, art spiegelman and Francoise Mouly, editors (RAW Books/Penguin)
TABOO no. 5, Stephen R. Bissette, editor (SpiderBaby/ Tundra)
TWISTED SISTERS, Diane Noomin, editor (Penguin Books)

BEST GRAPHIC ALBUM, NEW MATERIAL (FIRST U.S. PUBLICATION)

ABRAHAM STONE by Joe Kubert (Platinum/Malibu)
JUDGMENT ON GOTHAM by Alan Grant, John Wagner, and Simon Bisley (DC Comics)
TO THE HEART OF THE STORM by Will Eisner (Kitchen Sink Press)
THE YATTERING AND JACK by Clive Barker, adapted by Steve Niles, art by John Bolton (Eclipse)

BEST GRAPHIC ALBUM, REPRINT

GIVE ME LIBERTY by Frank Miller and Dave Gibbons (Dark Horse)
THE GROO CHRONICLES by Sergio Aragones with Mark Evanier (Graphitti Designs/Epic Comics)
LOVE AND ROCKETS BOOK NINE: FLIES ON THE CEILING by Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez (Fantagraphics Books)
MAUS II by art spiegelman (RAW Books/Pantheon)
THE SANDMAN: DREAM COUNTRY by Neil Gaiman, Kelley Jones, Charles Vess, Colleen Doran, and Malcolm Jones III (DC Comics)

BEST COMIC STRIP COLLECTION

BATMAN: THE DAILIES, 1943-1946 (Kitchen Sink Press)
BATMAN: THE SUNDAY CLASSICS, 1943-1946 (Kitchen Sink Press)
LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND, Vol. 5 by Winsor McKay (Remco/Fantagraphics Books)
THE REVENGE OF THE BABY-SAT by Bill Watterson (Andrews and McMeel)
TERRY & THE PIRATES COLOR SUNDAYS, Vol. 3 by Milton Caniff (NBM)
UNNATURAL SELECTIONS by Gary Larson (Andrews and McMeel)

BEST HUMOR PUBLICATION

BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT COMIC BOOK by Evan Dorkin (Marvel Comics)
FLAMING CARROT COMICS By Bob Burden (Dark Horse)
GROO THE WANDERER by Sergio Aragones with Mark Evanier (Marvel Comics)
HATE by Peter Bagge (Fantagraphics Books)
MILK AND CHEESE by Evan Dorkin (Slave Labor)
NAUGHTY BITS by Roberta Gregory (Fantagraphics Books)
20 NUDE DANCERS 20 YEAR TWO by Mark Martin (Tundra)

BEST WRITER

PETER BAGGE, *Hate* (Fantagraphics)
SARAH E. BYAM, *Billi 99* (Dark Horse)
PETER DAVID, *Incredible Hulk, X-Factor* (Marvel Comics)
NEIL GAIMAN, *Sandman, Books of Magic* (DC), *Miracleman* (Eclipse)
ALAN MOORE, "From Hell" and "Lost Girls" in *Taboo* (Tundra)
GRANT MORRISON, *Doom Patrol* (DC Comics)
HARVEY PEKAR, *American Splendor* (Tundra)
DAVE SIM, *Cerebus the Aardvark*

BEST ARTIST

SERGIO ARAGONES, *Groo the Wanderer* (Marvel Comics)
SIMON BISLEY, *Batman: Judgement on Gotham* (DC Comics)
PAUL CHADWICK, *Concrete: Fragile Creature* (Dark Horse)
DAVID CHELSEA, *David Chelsea in Love* (Eclipse)
WILL EISNER, *To the Heart of the Storm* (Kitchen Sink)
JOSE LUIS GARCIA-LOPEZ, *Twilight* (DC Comics)
FRANK MILLER, "Sin City" in *Dark Horse presents* (Dark Horse)
DAVID SIMS, *Brotherman* (Big City Comics)

BEST INKER

TERRY AUSTIN, *Wonder Man, Infinity Gauntlet* (Marvel Comics)
MARK FARMER, *The Incredible Hulk* (Marvel Comics)
KARL KESEL, *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis, Terminator: Secondary Objectives* (Dark Horse)
ADAM KUBERT, *Batman versus Predator* (Dark Horse/ DC Comics)
ART THIBERT, *The Uncanny X-men* (Marvel Comics)

BEST COLORIST

LOVERN KINDZIERSKI, *Legion 91/92* (DC Comics)
TOM LUTH, *Usagi Yojimbo Color Special, No. 2* (Fantagraphics Books), *Groo the Wanderer* (Marvel/Epic)
STEVE OLIFF, *Legends of the Dark Knight* (DC Comics), *2112* (Dark Horse), *Akira* (Marvel/Epic)
CRIS PALOMINO, *Uncle Scrooge*,

Disney Digest, Jetsons (Disney)
DANIEL VOZZO, *The Sandman, Doom Patrol* (DC Comics)

BEST WRITER/ARTIST OR WRITER-ARTIST TEAM

JOHN BYRNE, "Next Men," *Dark Horse Presents, 2112* (DC Comics), *She-Hulk, Namor* (Marvel Comics)
PAUL CHADWICK, *Concrete: Fragile Creature* (Dark Horse)
DAVID CHELSEA, *David Chelsea in Love* (Eclipse)
MAX ALLAN COLLINS and TERRY BEATTY, *Ms. Tree Quarterly* (DC Comics)
PETER DAVID and DALE KEOWN, *The Incredible Hulk* (Marvel Comics)
GILBERT HERNANDEZ, *Love and Rockets* (Fantagraphics Books)
JAIME HERNANDEZ, *Love and Rockets* (Fantagraphics Books)
FRANK MILLER, "Sin City," *Dark Horse Presents* (Dark Horse)
DAVE SIM and GERHARD, *Cerebus the Aardvark* (Aardvark-Vanaheim)

BEST EDITOR

KAREN BERGER, *The Sandman, Shade the Changing Man, Kid Eternity, The Books of Magic* (DC Comics)
MIKE CARLIN, Superman titles, *The Psycho*, (DC Comics)
BARBARA KESEL, *Badlands, Aliens, Genocide, Star Wars* (Dark Horse)
DIANA SCHUTZ, *Billi 99, Batman versus Predator, Predator: Big Game* (Dark Horse)
RANDY STRADLEY, *Dark Horse Presents, Give Me Liberty* (Dark Horse)

BEST COVER ARTIST

SIMON BISLEY, *Doom Patrol, Judgement on Gotham* (DC Comics)
BRIAN BOLLAND, *Animal Man*, (DC Comics)
DAVE DORMAN, *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis, Star Wars* (Dark Horse)
BRENDAN McCARTHY, *Shade, the Changing Man* (DC Comics)

BEST COMICS-RELATED BOOK

FROM AARGH! TO ZAP! by Harvey Kurtzman (Prentice Hall Press)
THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF SUPERHERO COMICS by Mike Benton (Taylor)
MARVEL: FIVE FABULOUS DECADES OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMICS by Les Daniels (Abrams)
PHOTO JOURNAL GUIDE TO MARVEL COMICS by Ernie Gerber (Gerber Publishing)

BEST COMICS-RELATED PERIODICAL

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE (Marketplace Publications)
COMICS BUYERS GUIDE (Krause Publications)
COMICS INTERVIEW (Fictioneer Books, Ltd.)
THE COMICS JOURNAL (Fantagraphics Books)
PURE IMAGES (Pure Imagination)

BEST COMICS-RELATED PRODUCT

CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS CANDY BARS AND BOX by Mark Schultz (Kitchen Sink Press)
CONCRETE COLD CAST by Randy Bowen (Dark Horse)
CRIMES AGAINST THE EYE TRADING CARDS by Robert Williams (Kitchen Sink Press)
MOEBIUS POSTERS OF MARVEL CHARACTERS (Marvel Comics)
SANDMAN STATUE by Randy Bowen (DC Comics)

HALL OF FAME

STEVE DITKO
BILL GAINES
BOB KANE
SHELDON MAYER
JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER
WALLY WOOD ●

FIRST PULITZER FOR A COMIC IS GIVEN TO ART SPIEGELMAN'S *MAUS*

A special Pulitzer award was given to art spiegelman for *Maus II*. The book is the second half of a combination biography of spiegelman's father Vladek and autobiography of spiegelman (at least in his relationship with his father), which juxtaposes Vladek's experiences in Auschwitz with his later life in America.

Jews are represented as mice and Nazis as cats in the work. "The Pulitzer board members, like book reviewers and bookstore owners before them, found the cartoon's depiction of Nazi Germany hard to classify," said the *N.Y. Times*, explaining the award's special categorization.

Signe Wilkinson of *The Daily News* of Philadelphia won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning. She is the first woman to win a Pulitzer in this category.

Her cartoons this year commented on a variety of themes, including the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings, U.S. aid to the Kurds, and date rape. Wilkinson has been with *The Daily News* since 1985, when she moved from the San Jose *Mercury News*.

Peters Wins Reuben

In other award news, Mike Peters, Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist and creator of the comic strip *Mother Goose & Grimm*, has won the 1991 Reuben Award from the National Cartoonists Society. Established in 1946, the prestigious Reuben Award is named after Rube Goldberg and represents the society's appreciation for "the world's outstanding cartoonist" of the year.

"The Pulitzer is the top journalism award, but having your peers name you the outstanding cartoonist of the year is truly the highlight of my life," commented Peters.

Peters' editorial cartoons appear in 200 newspapers nationwide through the United Feature Syndicate. In addition to the Pulitzer Prize and the Reuben Award, Peters has won the National Headliners Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award Citation, and the Overseas Press Club Award for Best Cartoons on Foreign Affairs. ●

The Pulitzer board admired *Maus II*, but found it hard to classify.

NO THANKS. WHAT HAPPENED IN 1944, AFTER YOU LEFT SRODULA?
WE SNEAKED TOWARD SOSNOWIEC...
IT WAS STILL DARK OUTSIDE...WE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO HIDE OURSELVES..

NEW ADDITION TO BATMAN CAST IN *AZRAEL*; SIMONSON ON SUPERMAN

The newest supporting character in the Batman cast is introduced in *Batman: Sword of Azrael*. Azrael is the enforcer of the semisecret Order of St. Dumas. In Gotham City to avenge the death of his father, Azrael is bound to cross paths with the Caped Crusader.

Walt Simonson's *Superman Special* tells a tale from Superman's past. All the kryptonite on Earth has been destroyed, but the process has created a sand creature that is slowly robbing Superman of his powers and his life!

Batman: Night Cries is a hardcover graphic novel in which Batman tries to find out who's responsible for the murder of a number of child abusers. Set several years in Batman's past, it stresses realistic action and characters. Archie Goodwin and *Books of Magic*'s Scott Hampton are the creative team.

The first nine issues of *Hellblazer* are collected in *Original Sins*. Jamie Delano, John Ridgway, and Alfredo Alcala tell the tales of DC's cynical, powerless magical anti-hero, John Constantine. The original covers by Dave McKean will also be reprinted.

The eight-part *Star Trek: The Modala Imperative* collects the two series

From *Batman: Lord of Azrael*.

that tell a single tale spanning *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Walter Koenig writes the introduction.

Alan Grant and *Marshal Law* artist Kevin O'Neill take a different look at Bat-Mite that you won't soon forget in *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #38. It's called, "The Legend of the Dark Mite."

Keith Giffen, one of Lobo's creators, is the artist of *Lobo: Infanticide* #1, in which Lobo's many illegitimate children, angered at the shame of such an unrespectable father, begin a plot of revenge by having Lobo drafted! Giffen and Alan Grant are the writers.

The *Sgt. Rock Special* features one of the most impressive creative lineups in recent memory. There's an original Rock tale by his creators, Robert Kanigher and Joe Kubert, plus other new stories by P. Craig Russell, George Pratt, Michael Golden, Timothy Truman, Matt Wagner, and John K. Snyder III. Wow!

Sandman: Seasons of the Mist collects the popular recent storyline from *Sandman* #22-28. Dave McKean paints a new cover.

The hero from the Red Planet becomes hooked up in the Red Menace/Red Scare in *Martian Manhunter: American Secrets*, a three-issue series about J'onn J'onzz's early days on Earth. ●

FANTAGRAPHICS: *UNSUPERVISED EXISTENCE* CREATOR INTRODUCES *CUD*

Terry LaBan, creator of the praised but poor-selling *Unsupervised Existence*, will start a new title, *Cud*. *Cud* will feature characters seen in in *UE*, but it will also have a wilder sense of humor. The main feature is about Bob, an incredibly untalented performance artist who tries to conquer New York City with a handful of dollars and a tutu.

Hate #10 features a surprise: a photo cover of the winner of the "Buddy Bradley Look-Alike Contest!"

Ten Years of Love & Rockets celebrates the first decade of the popular comic by Gilbert & Jaime Hernandez. It features interviews with Jaime & Gilbert, an illustrated index to all the characters, rare art & more. Meanwhile, the *Love & Rockets Trading Cards* has 36 new full color cards by the Bros.

The wildest science fiction art by Vaughn Bode is collected in *Junkwaffel Volume 1*. It features such stories as "Machines," a pre-*Terminator*, pre-cyberpunk tale of humans trying to survive in a world of battling machines. It includes several pages of full color.

Completely Bad Boys collects the nasty, adolescent adventures of Billy and Bobby, two fun-loving bullies who tease and occasionally murder their

Cud and its lovely new spokesmodel

luckless peers. It's by J.R. Williams, who will start an ongoing series from Fantagraphics sometime this winter.

Eros

Punk dilettante artist Lydia Lunch lends her name to *Lydia Lunch: Bloodsucker*, illustrated by Bob Fingerman. Not for the squeamish! *Screw Funnies* #1 reprints some of the truly warped sex cartoons from *Screw*, America's sex trade publication. Alazar, the creator of *Women on Top*, presents *Big Top Bondage*. P.W. Williams' *Sin of the Mummy* #1 is an erotic tale based on those old Boris Karloff vehicles. Gilbert Hernandez's popular *Birdland* #1 will be reprinted.

LARGE COLLECTION OF *YELLOW KID* ART DISCOVERED IN SYRACUSE

What is believed to be the largest collection of "Yellow Kid" art anywhere in the world was unearthed a few months ago in the archives of Syracuse University's Bird Library, located in Syracuse, New York.

Eleven original pen-and-ink drawings of the Kid, 10 of which have never been published, plus numerous complete runs of *The Yellow Kid* magazine, were found wrapped in corrugated cardboard at the end of a row of other material published by New York City's prolific Street & Smith company.

The Yellow Kid first appeared in Richard Felton Outcault's *Hogan's Alley* cartoon in the May 5, 1895, edition of the *New York World*, a newspaper owned by Joseph Pulitzer. The character, who achieved instant popularity, wore a yellow nightshirt upon which social commentary was written. In 1896, Outcault was lured to William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*, where he drew his character under the title *The Yellow Kid. Hogan's World*, which was taken over by newcomer George Luks, continued to be printed in the *World* for some years after. The Kid's yellow shirt became a symbol of the vicious newspaper war between Pulitzer and Hearst and gave rise to the term "yellow journalism."

In 1897, Street & Smith began publication of *The Yellow Kid* magazine, billed as "a fortnightly magazine of wit, fiction, and illustration." Historians generally agree that this was America's first comic book. The Yellow Kid appeared on the cover of the magazine—though not the inside — for six issues, then disappeared from the seventh. For issue #10, the title of the magazine was changed to *The Yellow Book*; five issues later, it folded. Outcault moved on to other cartooning work, including the creation of another famous character, Buster Brown.

One of The Yellow Kid drawings found at the Syracuse University library is the original for issue #1 of the magazine. It shows the Kid surrounded by paste-up paraphenalia; his shirt says, "Say, if you see it in de Yeller Kid, it goes, see?" The rest of the drawings, all unpublished, are believed by the library to have been intended for later covers. They show the Kid in various roles, including boxer, hunter, farmer, ship's captain, cowboy, singer, and society swell.

Mark Weimer, curator of special collections at SU's library, said that the university plans to have the drawings professionally cleaned and mounted for possible eventual display in the library. ●

DARK HORSE CREATES JACK KIRBY SCHOLARSHIP; COWAN SELLS SCOTCH

COMIC BOOK PROPAGANDA: Peru president Alberto Fujimori is using a comic book as a new weapon in the propaganda war against the Maoist Shining Path Guerillas. According to a report in the May, 1992 *Capital Internal Correspondence*, the book, titled *Senderista* has been criticized as being too complicated, giving too much attention to the enemy's views, and for being printed in Spanish instead of Quechua, the native language of the Andean villagers that are its target audience. Comic books have been popular propaganda tools throughout the 20th Century.

* * *

ART EXHIBITS: Doug Allen, Dan Clowes, Gary Leib, Heather McAdams, and Chris Ware are the artists featured in the "cARToonists" show at Chicago's Ten In One Gallery. The gallery is located at 1510 West Ohio.

The Lambiek Gallery in Amsterdam was scheduled to open a Will Eisner exhibit on June 13. The Eisner show will consist of sketches and little-known material, as well as the original drawings of a *Spirit* story, some *Spirit* covers, and a large number of pencil pages for *To the Heart of the Storm*. The exhibition will last for about two months.

* * *

DISTRIBUTOR FAILS: The Minnesota-based North Wind Distribution has gone out of business. When asked why his company, which distributed only independent titles, had failed, president Dave Johnson cited "the classic reason most first-year businesses go under—undercapitalization."

Nevertheless, Johnson feels that his approach to distribution would work for a company that had more capital than North Wind did. "It's a good business whose time has come," he said. "The industry is in dire need of a distributor that handles only independents. We just didn't have the cash flow."

* * *

BATSTUFF: With the release of *Batman Returns*, DC is doing its best to gain public interest through merchandising. At least 150 *Batman Returns* products have been licensed so far, "with more being added every day," according to *Internal Correspondence*. In addition to common items such as T-shirts and trading cards, the licenses include everything from boxer shorts to clocks to action figures.

Most of these products will be available in toy stores, but a number are being reserved exclusively for the direct comics market. Warner Brothers is helping to crack down on counterfeiters by marking most licensed goods with a Batman hologram that is nearly impossible to reproduce.

* * *

CHARGES DROPPED: Obscenity charges against a Canadian cartoonist have been dropped, according to a report in the May 31 *Province*. Mark Laliberte was a 12th Grader when he was charged with distributing and selling obscene material in his homemade magazine *Headtrip*. An Ontario Provincial Court concluded that the cartoonist's drawings of *Peanuts* characters Snoopy and Sally having sex were essentially literary and artistic ventures. Nonetheless, Laliberte said he'll "be more careful about what I do now."

* * *

HORRIFIC JOURNEY: Working from a lifetime of interest, research, and an imposing horror collection, artist/writer Stephen R. Bissette has assembled his own visual history of the horror comic as a slide show performance, entitled "Journey into Fear: The History and Heritage of the Horror Comic." Bissette plans to show his presentation at horror and comic cons throughout the summer.

* * *

ED THE HAPPY CLOWN—THE MOVIE: Chester Brown has sold the film rights to his graphic novel *Ed the Happy Clown* for an undisclosed amount to Bruce McDonald, whose other movies include *Highway 61* and *Roadkill*. McDonald approached Brown with the offer because he thinks that *Ed the Happy Clown* is "the greatest comic book ever written."

McDonald is working with Don McKeller on the screenplay. He hopes to start shooting by the end of the year.

* * *

OLYMPIC MASCOT: Cartoonist Javier Mariscal has created the mascot for the 1992 summer Olympics in Barcelona. "Cobi," named after COOB (the acronym for the committee that is organizing this summer's Olympics), is "a courageous Catalan dog of the Pyrenees," though he is more reminiscent of Krazy Kat than of any Catalan legend. Cobi's friend Petra, also created by Mariscal, is a female dog with no forelegs. She is the mascot for the Paralympics in September.

* * *

KIRBY YES-PRIZE: Dark Horse Comics has established the $1000 Jack Kirby Scholarship, which will be awarded to a first-year applicant for the '92-'93 school year at the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art in Dover, New Jersey. Three $500 scholarships to second-year students will also be offered.

Dark Horse CEO Mike Richardson said that he established the scholarships to give something back to the comics industry. The winners of the scholarships will be determined by a board of Kubert School faculty members.

* * *

KING & QUEEN: Meanwhile, comics legend Jack Kirby and his wife Roz celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 23. "Fifty years of marriage is a true test of love and happiness. We wish to thank all of our friends for their good wishes," said Jack.

* * *

NATLAMP SUSPENDS PUBLICATION: *National Lampoon*, the bi-monthly humor magazine which crested in popularity during the 1970s, recently suspended publication for up to six months, said Don Timmel of JE Publishers' Representative Co., the firm currently handling the magazine. According to Timmel, the June and August issues will be skipped, with the magazine reappearing in October.

* * *

CARTOONIST DIRECTS MOVIE: *Delicatessen*, a new movie described by the *Seattle Weekly* as a "Sartre-meets-Jerry Lewis futuristic science-fiction farce," is directed by cartoonist Marc "the attila of graphism" Caro. Caro's cartoons have appeared in publications worldwide, including *RAW*, *Frigidaire*, *Metal Hurlant*, *Casual Casual* and *Impulse*, as well as in his books *TOT* and *VITRO*. His other work includes music with the band Parazite, rock video "Zoolook" for Jean Michel Jarre and feature film *Le Bunker de la Derniere Rafale*.

* * *

CAPITAL RECYCLES: After a year's research, Capital City Distribution announced in April that it would switch to recycled paper for its publications *Advance Comics*, *Advance Comics Orderbook*, and *Orderpak*.

* * *

SCRAPPING *TAPPING*: As if Eclipse didn't have enough problems with the furor over its *True Crime* trading card series, *Tapping the Vein #2*, an adaptation of Clive Barker's *Books of Blood*, was ordered to be removed from school libraries in Portland, Oregon by school officials in March due to its inclusion of "graphic descriptions of sexual acts."

* * *

ANIME FESTIVAL: The Anime Expo '92, coming to San Jose's Red Lion Inn over the 4th of July weekend, will showcase current Japanese comic and animation art. Special guests include Haruhiko Mikimoto, (*Macross II*), Minoru Takanashi (*Macross II*, *The Guyver*, *Gunbuster*), and Yoshiyuki Tomino (*Gundam F-91*, *Mobile Suit Gundam*).

* * *

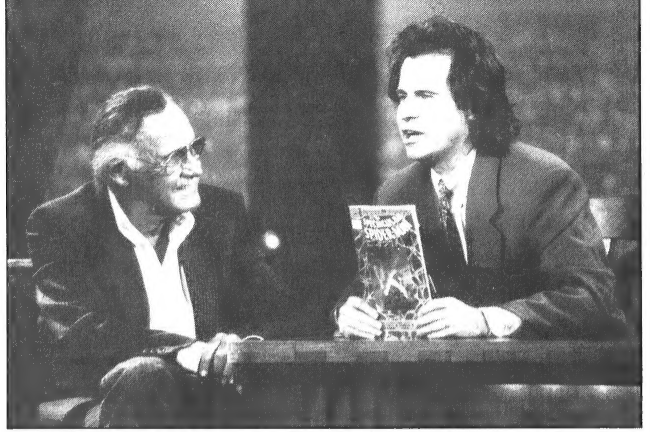
DARK HORSE CHANGES: Dark Horse Comics has announced that Ronnie Noize will be taking over Bob Schreck's position as marketing director. Noize comes to Dark Horse from the C.E.O. position at the American branch of Juggler Records, a division of the Tokyo-based Juggler Systems. Schreck will assume the position of Director of Special Projects, a move he has been eagerly anticipating for some time.

* * *

COWAN GETS SMASHED: Denys Cowan, DC artist, recently appeared in a Dewar's Scotch Whiskey ad. With Rob Liefeld selling Levi's 501 Blues, could this be a trend?

* * *

ART AUCTION: Alternative publication *CounterMedia* is offering an auction of original art, comics, magazines, and old collectibles by several underground cartoonists. For more information, write PO Box 6822, Portland, OR 97228-6822. ●



What Can We Tell Ya?: Dennis Miller, who recently had Rob Liefeld on his late night talk show, plugged the 30th anniversary of Spider-Man with Spidey's co-creator Stan Lee. Miller has revealed himself to be a Marvel fan from way back.

EASTMAN BUYS *HEAVY METAL*; DISNEY ADAPTS ITS *ALADDIN* FEATURE

AC: Fans of '50s western comics will want to pick up *Best of the West*, book collection of comics originally published by Magazine Enterprises. Most of the material was written by Golden Age Great Gardner Fox, and illustrators include Dick Ayers and Frank Frazetta.

All Star Comics: An organization of super-powered soldiers is pitted against a cadre of super-spies in *Omega Force* #1, by Robert Alvord.

Archie: *Veronica's Passport Digest* #1 reprints her many overseas adventures, including a new one set in Hong Kong!

Caliber: "To Kill a King" is a new *Deadworld* miniseries in which the dreaded King Zombie might finally get his.

Mr. Trianglehead is a weird new series from J. Calafiore, the creator of *Camelot Eternal*. It's about a weird, inverted pyramid that claims to be god.

Brian Bolland does the first cover to *Kilroy Was Here*, in which a reporter finally finds the real "Kilroy" and almost wishes he hadn't.

Charles Yates' *Godcrasher* has a confusing solicitation, but it has a picture of a muscular guy with dreadlocks and two huge guns.

Dark Horse: Masamune Shirow will be featured in two projects from DH.

Intron Depot collects Shirow's color art, many of it published for the first time anywhere, in a 148-page trade paperback.

In September, Shirow's six-issue *Orion* will kick off with a 56-page first issue. Fred Schodt (*Manga! Manga!*) and Toren Smith translate.

DC: Disney has sold its Touchmark line of mature comics to DC Comics; acccording to Andrea Beam, Associate Publisher for Disney Comics, the decision to sell was based on Disney's new strategy to concentrate on the collectors' and children's markets. Touchmark editor Art Young will move to DC along with the line he helped to develop and oversee.

Disney: Disney's latest animated feature is adapted into the *Aladdin* graphic novel. Bobbi JG Weiss and Xavi are the creative team.

Disney Comics Special: Dongld and Scrooge features all Don Rosa work. Included are "Return to Xanadu," "The Money Pit," and "Treasure Under Glass."

Felix Comics/Global Comics: The new Felix comics are *Classic Felix* #1 (featuring new adventures in black & white), *Felix the Cat...The Movie* (using original stills from the movie), and *Felix & Friends* #1.

Global Comics' *Blue Arrow* #1 is about a Robin Hood-era bowman with a magic arrow.

Red's Tube Bar Comics #1 features a cassette tape set so you can read and hear the barroom humor of this off-color color title.

Heavy Metal: Tundra and Mirage publisher Kevin Eastman has purchased *Heavy Metal* from J2 Communications. According to Ann Eagan, Tundra Promotions Director, the illustrated magazine is fully owned by Eastman under the company Metal Mammoth, a separate entity from both Tundra and Mirage. Eastman took over as publisher of *Heavy Metal* with the May issue.

Heroic Publishing: It's a rematch in the two-part *Flare Vs. the Tigress* by Dennis Mallonee and Paul Abrams. Flare's arch-foe decides to inhabit a new body—Flare's!

Kitchen Sink: KS has decided *not* to reduce the size of their *Li'l Abner* books as they previously announced. Volume 13 will be in the usual 12" by 9" size, but at the reduced price that KS announced for the smaller version they announced. Future softcover volumes will be offered at the usual size and price, but the hardback prices will go up. Publisher Denis Kitchen said the larger size allows the best reproduction of Al Capp's beautifully preserved originals.

The $39.95 *Grateful Dead Comics* hardcover will be limited to 700 copies. Jerry Garcia writes the introduction.

Harvey Kurtzman's *Hey Look!* has been resolicited.

In September, The first of two volumes reprinting the Austin Briggs daily *Flash Gordon* strips will be available. These strips were created to supplement Alex Raymond's popular sunday pages, and the daily continuity allowed Briggs to create more ambitious and complex storylines.

Mirage: You probably already know that *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* #50 is by Eastman and Laird, is in full color, and takes the book in a new direction. But you might not know that Todd McFarlane, Eric Larsen, Walt Simonson and others will do pin-up pages for it.

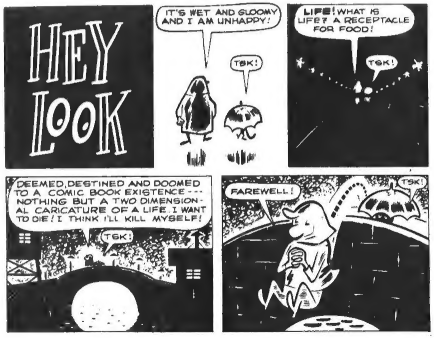
Those who wish to check out the Turtle's beginnings can purchase the *Deluxe TMNT Book One—Facsimile Softcover Reprint*, printing the first Turtles adventure in its original sepia color, plus sketchbook pages, story roughs, and an introduction by Harlan Ellison.

Sun: Schanes Products and Services, a San Diego-based comic book publisher and mail order company, has announced the formation of Sun Comic Publishing, a division of Picture Entertainment Corporation (PEC). Sun will publish numerous popular manga titles in English, most of which will be adapted to motion picture form. Likewise, Sun will adapt many current PEC films into comic books or graphic novels.

The first Sun Comic title, scheduled for July publication, is *Raika*, "a Japanese-style Arthurian tale" already popular in Japan. *Raika, the Movie* is in production in Japan, due to be released in 1993. No U.S. release date has been set.

Titan: Two volumes of Titan's *2000 AD Classic Series* will be available this year. *Nemesis: The Beginning*

The collection of Kurtzman's classic *Hey Look* cartoons is finally available.


HEY LOOK
IT'S WET AND GLOOMY AND I AM UNHAPPY!
TSK!
LIFE! WHAT IS LIFE? A RECEPTACLE FOR FOOD!
TSK!
DEEMED, DESTINED AND DOOMED TO A COMIC BOOK EXISTENCE --- NOTHING BUT A TWO DIMENSIONAL CARICATURE OF A LIFE. I WANT TO DIE! I THINK I'LL KILL MYSELF!
(TSK!)
FAREWELL!
TSK!

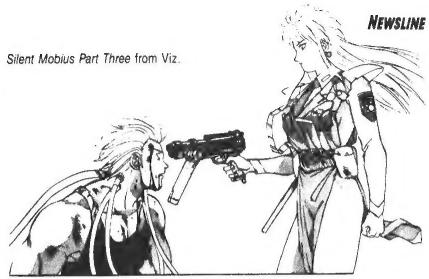
features the origin of Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill's alien hero, chasing the personification of evil through time.

The Complete Judge Dredd in Oz refers to Australia, not L. Frank Baum. Dredd has to deal with the Midnight Surfer, as well as the evil judge imitators known as the Judda.

Topps: Topps Comics, Inc., a subsidary of the Topps Company, Inc., has announced that its first comic book release will be a *Dracula* series. The series will be based upon Columbia Pictures' forthcoming movie adaptation of Bram Stoker's gothic romance *Dracula*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola and starring Anthony Hopkins, Gary Oldman, Winona Ryder, Keanu Reeves, Bill Campbell, Tom Waits, Cary Elwes, Richard E. Grant and Sadie Frost.

The comic version of *Dracula*, adapted from the movie screenplay by Roy Thomas and drawn by Mike Mignola, will be a four-part series premiering in October. The *Dracula* comics will be packaged with corresponding Topps trading cards, as will all subsequent Topps comics.

Silent Mobius Part Three from Viz.



Viz: *Silent Mobius Part Three* has the A.P.M. trying to save Tokyo from a villain who has entered the city's massive computer system and is destroying it from within. Only Lebia, with her ability to enter the computer network a la *Fantastic Voyage* can save the day. ●

COMICS BESTSELLERS—MAY

All figures from the May, 1992 Capital City *Internal Correspondence* newsletter. Figures represent direct market retail orders. Numbers in parentheses ( ) represent a title's overall position on the charts.

TOP TEN COMICS (TOTAL $$$)

(The comics with the highest orders in terms of $$$ spent)

1. Spawn #1 ..... Malibu
2. Web of Spider-Man #90 ..... Marvel
3. Infinity War #2 ..... Marvel
4. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #1 ..... DC
5. RoboCop Vs. Terminator #1 ..... Dark Horse
6. X-Men #10 ..... Marvel
7. Batman: Catwoman Defiant ..... DC
8. Punisher/Captain America #1 ..... Marvel
9. Spider-Man #24 ..... Marvel
10. Batman: Penguin Triumphant ..... DC

TOP TEN COMICS (CIRCULATION)

(The comics with the most issues ordered)

1. Spawn #1 ..... Malibu
2. X-Men #10 ..... Marvel
3. Uncanny X-Men #290 ..... Marvel
4. X-Force #12 ..... Marvel
5. Web of Spider-Man #90 ..... Marvel
6. Infinity War #2 ..... Marvel
7. Spider-Man #24 ..... Marvel
8. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #1 ..... DC
9. Ghost Rider #27 ..... Marvel
10. RoboCop Vs. Terminator #1 ..... Dark Horse

TOP TEN INDEPENDENT COMICS (CIRC.)

1 (1). Spawn #1 ..... Malibu
2 (10). RoboCop Vs. Terminator #1 ..... Dark Horse
3 (44). Next Men #4 ..... Dark Horse
4 (47). Aliens: Hive #4 ..... Dark Horse
5 (53). Archer & Armstrong #1 ..... Voyager
6 (57). Eternal Warrior #1 ..... Voyager
7 (59). Aliens: Newt's Tale #1 ..... Dark Horse
8 (64). Terminator: Hunters and Killers #3 Dark Horse
9 (72). Magnus #15 ..... Voyager
10 (75). X-O Manowar #7 ..... Voyager

TOP TEN BLACK & WHITE COMICS (CIRC.)

1 (135). Dark Horse Presents #62 ..... Dark Horse
2 (150). Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #47 ..... Mirage
3 (158). Crow #3 ..... Tundra
4 (164). Savage Sword of Conan #199 ..... Marvel
5 (179). Robotech: Invid War #1 ..... Malibu
6 (181). Cerebus #158 ..... Aardvark-Vanaheim
7 (198). Usagi Yojimbo #35 ..... Fantagraphics
8 (199). Loco Vs. Pulverine #1 ..... Eclipse
9 (202). Conan Saga #64 ..... Marvel
10 (211). Hard Rock #5 ..... Revolutionary

TOP PUBLISHERS/MARKET SHARES

1. Marvel 43.90%
2. DC 25.90%
3. Dark Horse 5.81%
4. Voyager 4.12%
5. Malibu 3.89%
6. Comico 1.04%
7. NOW 0.97%
8. Fantagraphics 0.84%
9. Innovation 0.75%
10. Personality 0.64%

TOP BOOKS ($$$)

1 (26). Batman: Dark Knight Archives 1 ..... DC
2 (27). Batman/Dracula: Red Rain Paperback ..... DC
3 (37). All Star Archives 1 ..... DC
4 (38). Batman Collection 1 ..... DC
5 (63). Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told ..... DC
6 (70). Spider-Man: Assassination Plot ..... Marvel

DC profits as batmania begins again, but it was also a healthy month for what have now been established as the "big three" independents; Dark Horse, Valiant, and Malibu's Image imprint. Valiant/Voyager's promotion of the "free" *Unity* #1 stirred a lot of controversy, but Valiant titles were ordered in record numbers. The Image momentum continues, with McFarlane's *Spawn* #1 getting a better reception than Spidey's 30th anniversary.

GRANT'S TOMES

NIGHTWING TELLS ME YOU WEREN'T INVOLVED WITH HIRAM. LUCKILY FOR YOU...!
NOW, I DON'T KNOW IF ZSASZ HAS CORRUPTED YOU, OR IF YOU REALLY ARE AS SICK AS YOU SEEM--BUT LISTEN TO ME--
I'LL BE WATCHING YOU JEREMIAH ARKHAM. PUT ONE FOOT WRONG AND I'LL DROP YOU!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

An Interview With The Writer of *LOBO, THE DEMON,* and the Upcoming *SHADOW OF THE BAT*

interview by Frank Plowright

Alan Grant has to be one of the most prolific comic writers. By my reckoning there was a period during 1990 when he was writing five monthly titles for DC and Marvel in addition to the two weekly strips he was contributing to 2000AD, *and installments for the then new* Judge Dredd Megazine. *When the* Lobo *miniseries, which he was merely co-plotting and scripting, ran its course he filled the spare hours by working up two strips for a new British weekly title and reviving the* Bogie Man *with John Wagner. It's all a far cry from his early days as struggling editorial trainee in Dundee with Scottish publishers D.C. Thompson, when he had to take a part time job as a waiter to make ends meet.*

These days Alan contents himself with a mere three monthly titles for the US, and the odd Judge Anderson serial, which of course leaves him time to work on the Judge Dredd movie script, Punisher graphic novels, a Wolverine series, a new photostrip, more Bogie Man stories...

AMAZING HEROES: *Let's start with Lobo, as at the moment he's the most popular character you're working on, at least in terms of the comic fan market.*

ALAN GRANT: At the moment, but I guess in another three for four months he won't be as *Shadow of the Bat* will be released and that'll swamp Lobo, so that scotches your first question.

AH: *Well let's talk about* Shadow of the Bat *then. It's a new monthly Batman title you're working on.*

ALAN: Yes, Norm Breyfogle and I have left *Batman* and we're working on *The Shadow of the Bat*, a new comic being launched to tie in with the *Batman Returns* movie. It's out of continuity, and the first story is a four-part story set in Arkham Asylum. "He's always walked the edge, but he never fell off before." Batman is an inmate in the asylum, but I'm not going to tell you what the story is.

AH: *Does the world really need a fourth Batman book?*

ALAN: Did it really need a fourth Spider-Man book? Did it really need *Terminator 2*? Did it really need more than three albums from the Beatles? What the world really needs now is love, sweet love; that's the only thing you can't get enough of.

AH: *Quite. Will the title be launched on the back of a gimmick?*

ALAN: I was told that the era of hologram covers and multi-covers was over. But I read in *Comics International* that it will be available in an ordinary comic edition like *Legend of the Dark Night*, but also in a special collectors pack where you get the comic, you get Brian Stelfreeze's cover poster from issues #1 and 2 as a free gift and you get a pop-up model of Arkham Asylum. I'm going to buy it. You push a little thing and the Joker pops up. I used to get books like that when I was ten years old, the Jan Pienkowski things you got in the late '70s and early '80s.

AH: *You're claiming to have been ten years old in the late '70s?*

ALAN: I'm a very old person. Sometimes I think I'm too old to be giving interviews. I meant when my daughter Shalla was 10 years old.

AH: *You mentioned that* Shadow of the Bat *is to be out of continuity. How important do you feel continuity is to the ongoing Batman mythos?*

ALAN: I think to a certain proportion of the readers contiuity is *very* important. The idea at DC is that the regular *Batman* title is the continuity title, in which he takes Vicki Vale out and kisses her and reveals his secret identity to her of whatever. Generally speaking, I always look at *Detective Comics* as the things that Batman did on his nights off from the *Batman* title. Obviously, if you attempt to fit a character like Batman into any real-time scenario, it can't be done, but comic fans do demand a certain amount of realism. They would write in their dozens, if not their hundreds, to complain if on the same night that Batman was fighting against Scarface and the Ventriloquist *Detective Comics* featured him on the moon fighting against the mad Mole Man or something. Well, a couple of them would.

AH: *Do you ever feel hamstrung by all that?*

ALAN: No, because I have quite a good way of working with Denny O'Neil (editor of the Batman titles). We have two bat meetings a year when artist as well as writers contributing to the Batman comics spend two, three, four days locked in a room together during which everybody gets to put in their ideas. The way it's worked out is that the stories the writers want to tell take into account the continuity that the fans ask for.

AH: *Do you monitor the contiuity yourself, or do you have to have brakes applied by Denny O'Neil?*

ALAN: Occasionally Denny sends over memos. The current Scarface story is a case in point. John Wagner and I were originally going to write that together, seeing as we created the character of Scarface together. We spent a couple of days working it out, and I then got a memo from Denny saying, "Remember that we're resolving the question of Vicky Vale and Bruce Wayne's relationship in this issue. We're splitting them up and she's going off with some other guy. Don't forget to do it." When I told John this he threw up his hands in horror and said, "I didn't say I would write *Batman* in order to write stuff about Vicky Vale." Basically, he just wasn't interested in writing it. John represents the continuity haters.

AH: *So the title is also compromised by the events that are occurring in the film.*

ALAN: That's why Vicky Vale was written out. If she's not going to be in the film, why have her in the comic?

AH: *What with the regular DC continuity, attempting to shoehorn in the events from the films and then having the annual DC crossover series,*

An action-filled page from *Shadow of the Bat*. Art by Norm Breyfogle.

GRANT'S TOMES

you've got three outside influences on the writing of your title.

ALAN: Yep, but that's my job. Batman isn't my character. I may be the main writer at the moment, but that's a temporary state of affairs. Batman is bigger than any writer, and will still be going long after I'm pushing up daisies. I look on my view of Batman as being fairly true to what Bob Kane wanted in the first place. Consequently when I see Batman appearing in *Justice League*, for want of a better example, piloting a spaceship, I don't see that as Batman. They've got Blue Beetle to put on a Batman suit.

Regarding the annuals, I think Denny would prefer to have the *Batman* and *Detective Comics* annuals kept out of the Annual crossover continuity stunts, but it's been proven that the crossover stunts sell more copies. That's not down to us; that's dictated by the sales people, and to an extent they have an influence on the stories we can write. Because I undertook to write the *Batman, Detective*, and *Robin* annuals this year, all with John Wagner, we had to take into account the Eclipso crossover stunt, and had to write Eclipso into all of them as the major villain. I can't say that I was all that happy about it, but at the end of the day we'd come up with good stories and that's what it's all about.

AH: *So it could act as a spur to you then?*

ALAN: It might. It was a challenge to write a decent story involving this Eclipso. DC are re-making him into a fallen angel who's 10,000-plus years old with incredible celestial powers, so how the hell do you pit a guy like that against Batman? You'll have to buy the annuals to see.

Lobo doesn't have a 50-year history before I came on the scene. He appeared for maybe a year or two before he disappeared again, and basically Keith Giffen and I along with Simon Bisley and Barry Kitson in *L.E.G.I.O.N.* have reinvented the character. Keith and myself have come to look on Lobo as ours. I pick up an issue of *Starman* and see that Lobo is fighting against Starman, and I wouldn't mind but it's so obvious that the Lobo that this guy is writing is not the Lobo that I write. The general impression seems to be that if you take a character with a personality all you've got to do is keep the words the same. As long as lobo says "Feetal's Gizz" every second word balloon and calls every second person a "bastich" they think that's Lobo's character, but there's a wee bit more to it than that.

That irritates me, but I don't own the character. DC owns the character, and because they're in the business to make as much money as they can when a character gets hot they tell all the writers to write him in and put the sales up.

AH: *There's going to be a regular Lobo book now.*

ALAN: It'll probably be regularly late unless Simon gets his head down. Just joking Simon, ha ha, I know that you finished inking it this weekend, you bastich.

It's not going to be a regular ongoing series, it'll be a four-issue miniseries, and the month after issue #4 there's another four-issue miniseries, and then there'll be another, so in the next year there'll be 12 Lobo stories with Simon Bisley illustrating. There are also several other Lobo projects in progress. My particular favorite is the *Lobo Convention Special*, in which Lobo would be the main guest at UKCAC. I won't tell you what happens to the organizers. We've got some nice things for Lobo to do to the fans who've made him into the man he is today.

AH: *Do you think there's a lot of life left in Lobo? I'd say here's a one-note character.*

ALAN: He is a one-note character. But the day that I stop laughing at Lobo is the day that I'll stop writing him. Tom and Jerry is a one-note cartoon, but.I can still watch them for 20 minutes every Saturday. You can probably read a Lobo issue in a lot less than 20 minutes. Lobo's just a cartoon with cartoon violence. You pick targets and go for them. For instance, in one series we're doing our version of Alcoholics Anonymous, which is Lobo's Bastard Children Anonymous. We find that over the years Lobo has populated a small galaxy with illegitimate children who have regular meetings because of the stigma of having Lobo as a father.

Another one is called "A Contract On God." A planet hires Lobo to assassinate their God because they want to move out of mediaeval times and get into nylon, plastics, industrialization, television, drugs, sex and rock 'n' roll. The God that created them many millenia before has decreed that he wants them to sit around worshipping him all the time, so they get a delegation to track down Lobo and hire him to assassinate God. It's not a put-down of religion in any way. "A light hearted and sincere homage to organized religion," is how I would put it.

AH: *I don't think I believe you.*

The next point I wanted to bring up concerns the fact that a lot of American creators are currently leaving major companies to set up their own company. You were involved in a British version of this last year, so how did it work out for you?

ALAN: Are we talking about *Toxic*? Oh Jesus. The reason *Toxic* failed was primarily that it was a weekly title at double the price of *2000 AD*. If it had been the same price it might have stood a chance. The secondary reason for its failure was that the creators involved came to distrust the company. Many creators were unhappy with the way things turned out.

AH: *How did this happen with a company that was half owned by a group of creators?*

ALAN: The company was not half owned by the creators. When the company was started up, what Apocalypse called the founding fathers (Alan Grant, Mike McMahon, Pat Mills, Kevin O'Neill and John Wagner) were given a small percentage of the company in return for a guaranteed amount of work in *Toxic*'s first year. It only lasted 31 issues, so it all became pretty academic. Suffice to say I'm far from being the only one left with a bad taste in my mouth. *Toxic* really was toxic.

AH: *How has the Toxic experience affected your feelings toward other new companies? For instance, you're now going to be working with Tundra.*

ALAN: Not at all. Tundra have an enviable reputation for friendliness towards creators. In the same way no one has anything but good to say about Dark Horse. *Toxic* was something new and different, and none of us really know what we were getting into. I don't think I'm wrong in saying that if the same situation were to arise with the same people again none of us would get involved.

AH: *Which comic creators do you most admire?*

ALAN: The ultimate guy working in this business has to be Will Eisner, and he's been doing comics for 50 years. He's not the greatest writer and he's not the greatest artist, but he is the greatest all-rounder.

AH: *I've always felt that there's a similarity between the Will Eisner Spirit stories and the best Judge Dredd material. The world created around the character is so extensive that they become superfluous. There are stories with both characters as the title that don't feature them until the end.*

ALAN: Many more Judge Dredd stories would have been like that than turned out that way had it not been for *2000 AD* editors who would frequently phone John Wagner and myself and say, "There's not enough Dredd in this Judge Dredd story. The front of *2000 AD* says '*2000 AD featuring Judge Dredd*.' We've got to have him in." John and I have written Dredd stories in which he didn't appear at all, and to my mind they were some of the best Judge Dredd stories. In the first part of "Citizen Snork," I don't think that Dredd appeared until the very last panel, and the caption ran "What's Judge Dredd got to do with this? Well, nothing really, but he'll be here next week."

Will Eisner did the same with the Spirit; it wasn't just a character. It was a world he created, and although the Spirit's image is behind everything there's no way you need him to be at the forefront.

AH: *Given the strength of Dredd's en-*

IF I BREAK FOR IT, IT'LL TRIGGER THE ALARM FOR SURE ... ARKHAM'S THUGS'LL COME RUNNING.
BLAST! IT'S GOING TO HAVE TO BE THE SLOW WAY.
CAN'T BE SURE THIS'LL WORK--
--BUT IT'S THE ONLY SHOT I HAVE!
COMMISSIONER? NIGHTWING.
I'VE ... ER, FOUND CERTAIN EVIDENCE...!
BATMAN'S RIGHT. IT IS ZSASZ!
HE'S BEEN SMUGGLING OUT THROUGH JOLLY HIRAM'S TUNNEL!
ESCAPE TUNNEL
"I'LL MEET YOU AT ARKHAM, SIR!"

A plot-filled page from *Shadow of the Bat*.

Bat-Mite returns! With art by Kevin O'Neill! In *Legends of the Dark Knight.*

vironment, how easy was it to slot him into Batman's world and vice versa for Judgement On Gotham*?*

ALAN: Well, I've said this before in interviews, so anyone who's read that should forgive me, but he's asked the same question so. . .The first version of the Dredd/Batman team-up that John and I wrote was law versus justice, Judge Dredd versus Batman. The other supporting cast didn't really feature in it. DC and Fleetway approved that plot and told us to go ahead with it, and John and I spent some considerable time writing it and unable to figure out why there seemed to be something missing.

When we thought about it, what was missing was humor. Justice versus law, which is more important? I've no idea which is more important, and I don't fucking care, but what was important to me was that it was funny. And it wasn't funny. We completely rewrote it, this time playing it strictly for laughs.

AH: *Is there likely to be a reprise of Judge Dredd and Batman?*

ALAN: It has been suggested, but I don't know. . . I'd like to do a Judge Anderson and Batman team-up and leave Judge Dredd out of it completely. Kevin Walker and I are collaborating on a new Anderson series for the *Judge Dredd Megazine*, which I'm really excited about. The story shows that Zecariah Stichin was right and the ancient gods were cosmonauts who made man as a hybrid slave. Cass gets to read God's mind, but not before he's destroyed Eden City. I figure I'll have her resigning from the Judges at the end of the story. Like, where do you go next when you've arm-wrestled with God?

AH: *You're working on a painted photostrip using models called* Dominator.

ALAN: With Tony Luke and Simon Bisley, yes. It's photostrip, but completely different from any other photostrip I know. The closest thing to it . .The last time I was in the States I saw some state of the art Japanese animation, which had the same sort of feel to them. It's demons from hell with rock 'n' roll. Tony's made it half a dozen times better than I expected, based on previous photostrips I've seen. I don't know how it will go down in America, but I hope the Japanese will pick up on it.

AH: *Do you want to explain the process involved?*

ALAN: Tony Luke, Simon Bisley and I developed some characters that Tony to a large extent had come up with previously. We plotted it and Tony then made models out of the characters. They were two-foot high finely detailed models that were fully posable. He then photographed the models in various positions against Simon Bisley's story board panels and did some voodoo stuff with laser printers and xerox machines. The results are given to Simon to paint on top of and you've got a comic.

AH: *But couldn't Simon just draw a comic that would look better?*

ALAN: The reason for not getting Simon to draw the comic is that is was Tony's character and Tony's idea to do it as a photostrip using the latest laser printing and color photocopying techniques. He has used them in a very creative way and I'm very happy with it.

AH: *I understand the first* Bogie Man *story has now been adapted for television by the BBC.*

ALAN: Yes, it's a 60-minute special that stars Robbie Coltrane as the Bogie Man, the beautiful Fiona Fullerton as Dr. Olive Branch, and I hope they write in the scene where she's wearing her night attire. I know that's sexist, but what can I say, I'm helpless in the wake of my desires. It also stars Craig Ferguson, who's taken over from Billy Connelly as Scotland's top stand-up comedian, and Midge Ure, co-organizer of Band Aid, plays the part of Mr. McCurdy the villain. The BBC are talking about doing more, but to get the funding it had to be sold to an American network. John and I can't sit around waiting to see if it's going to be successful because the BBC paid us such shitty money for the *Bogie Man* that we can't afford to sit around doing anything. We've got to work.

AH: *Have you seen the film at all?*

ALAN: No, but as the creators of the character and the book we are probably the last people they'd think of showing it to.

AH: *Tundra will be publishing a new* Bogie Man *series.*

ALAN: They're doing the *Manhattan Project*, which was released late last year by the late and not at all lamented *Toxic*, at least not lamented by me. The only thing I lament is that some people didn't meet gory deaths.

The printing was terrible, word balloons were slipping, pages were in the wrong order. . .Robin Smith has drawn a new cover, put the pages back in the correct order and the balloons back in the places where they should be, so all the people who read the *Manhattan Project* and thought, "What the fuck is going on here?" can now buy it again secure in the knowledge that they'll find the answer to that question.

Toxic were also running a Bogie Man story drawn by Cam Kennedy, but Cam became too busy with his *Star Wars* material to finish it off. John and I have rewritten it for Robin Smith with black & white in mind, and Tundra will be releasing it as four 24-page issues during this summer. There will be all-new artwork and all-new covers, and we hope the BBC will pick up on *Chinatoon* as well, but pay us better money this time.

AH: *When you write a script knowing which artist is drawing it do you particularly tailor it to them?*

ALAN: Yes, I prefer to know beforehand which artist I'm writing for. If I've to write a *Demon* story I'll call Val Semeiks and ask him, "Is there anything you really want to draw, Val?" I do this with nearly every artist I work with if I know in advance who it's going to be. It makes more sense to tailor the scripts to the artist because they're more likely to give you a good job drawing something they want to draw. I consider myself a storyteller, but I don't see myself as an artist.

AH: *Of the wide cast of characters you work with, which do you enjoy writing the most?*

ALAN: At the moment it's Lobo because he's the Three Stooges taken to the ultimate. He's black & white slapstick films in comic form, except he's ripping off people's limbs as well. It's just a laugh.

Up until Lobo Batman was my favorite character because when I was a kid I wanted to be Batman. I still want to be Batman, but nobody ever bumped my parents off. I'm the wrong side of 25 and I'm just getting stiff. I can't limber up for those nocturnal hops across the roofs of Gotham.

Sam Kieth art for the *Batman Annual*, which is part of the "Eclipso" crossover.

Having said that, there is a special place in my heart for the Bogie Man because I think Bogie has something that both Lobo and Batman have that entitles him to a permanent place in publication. The characters are so good they deserve to last for years.

Other characters don't deserve to be seen once. Many of the things that I've done didn't deserve to be seen once, my *Robocop* for example. If people come up and ask me to sign *Robocop* for them I usually pretend that I'm Alan Davis and say I never had anything to do with that stuff. There are other things that went out under other names because I preferred that people didn't know it was me doing them.

AH: *A lot of* 2000 AD *strips.*

ALAN: Oh no. The reason that *2000 AD* replaced John's name and my name with pseudonyms wasn't our idea. We wanted to claim credit for what we were doing with *2000 AD*, and the managing director at that time, a guy who in my opinion was a wee shite. . .

AH: *Allegedly, Alan, allegedly.*

ALAN: Yes, allegedly a wee shite. Well, he phoned us up and allegedly said that he was sick of seeing our names all over *2000 AD* and could we start coming up with pseudonyms because while he didn't mind us writing the whole comic, he allegedly didn't want the readership to know it was the same two guys writing the whole thing. Publishers, particularly publishers who own the characters, can't allow the writers and artists to have too much power. We own the Bogie Man and if we want to have a lamp post coming out of his arse with no explanation we could do it.

AH: *Something you mentioned elsewhere recently is that you don't think editors receive enough credit for what they do. That's not an opinion that many comic creators seem to hold.*

ALAN: I shall revise that and say that good editors don't receive enough credit for what they do. In this country there is no training scheme for editors and consequently, there are very few good editors. The standing joke among creators used to be that the

better you were as an editor, the faster you left to go freelance.

AH: *Specifically, what would you say was wrong with* 2000 AD *today?*

ALAN: *2000 AD*'s decline is largely due to the fact that Alan McKenzie has foisted hip-hop and dance music on the *2000 AD* readers who are by inclination heavy metal fans or punk music fans.

AH: *That's rather an absolute statement.*

ALAN: I'm rather an absolute guy. You can dispute this theory, but if you do I'll get up and walk away. (Note to readers: this was a joke. Try them at home. They're fun.) If you listen to any hip-hop or dance music it's an idea, a hook that's repeated for however long the record lasts. They are not constructed in the way that songs are, with a verse and a chorus. There's no story. It's all style over content, and the same thing has happened to *2000 AD*. They think that because they can present a few outrageous ideas that they don't have to tell a story anymore, and they're very, very wrong.

There are natural story writers, but not everyone can be, and editorial guidance is needed to bring along your storytellers. I've attacked Mark Millar in print before, perhaps a little unfairly, because of what I consider he did to *Robo-Hunter*. Mark is a young writer who has a lot of good ideas, but what he doesn't have is the firm editorial guidance that actually says to him, "Mark, this is good, we're going with this, but these four pages are crap. Where's the story? Cut that out." That's what an editor's job is, and in Britain it seems over the last decade or so to have fallen into disrepute.

In my opinion it's as difficult to be a good editor as it is to be a good writer. Denny O'Neil on *Batman* is an examplary editor to my mind. He knows his character indside and out and he's been involved with Batman perhaps longer than anyone else in the business still working on the character. He knows that at the end of the day good storytelling is the most important thing in comics. It's not the province of the writer or the artist, but what happens when you put them both together.

I've got quite a lot of respect for David Bishop, editor of the *Judge Dredd Megazine*. He trained in New Zealand as a newspaper journalist, so was forced to work to a discipline.

In July's one-shot *Lobo: Blazing Chain of Love*, the Main Man endorses condom use. You don't want to know the details. Art by Bisley.

GRANT'S TOMES

AH: *How critical are you regarding your successors on characters that you've relinquished?*

ALAN: I'm quite critical, but at the same time I'd like to think I'm fair. Savagely fair, let's say. Do you want me to criticize individuals?

AH: *Not necessarily. It is a leading question because I've not known anyone other than yourself and John Wagner to be as outspokenly critical of their successors.*

ALAN: Yeah, we're savagely fair bastards. I don't like what Garth (Ennis), for instance, has done with Judge Dredd. Instead of bringing new ideas to it, which I know he's more than capable of, he's rehashed everything John and I ever wrote. My criticism of Mark Millar is different. Mark has real new ideas, but unfortunately, they had nothing to do with the character he took over from us (Robo-Hunter). I trained as an editor long before I became a freelancer. I like editing. I'd like to edit Garth, and Mark, and Grant Morrison. I used to really want to edit Alan Moore.

AH: *In a red pen sense?*

ALAN: Sometimes, yes. Alan would have listened. He's a great writer, but he knows that nobody's perfect and is open to criticism.

AH: *Is this not just a question of personal interpretation? There are a lot of people who are perfectly happy with Mark Millar's Robo-Hunter* work.

ALAN: Name them. (Another joke. We all laugh. Don't forget to try it at home.) I may well come down to personal preferences. I have to say it's never occurred to me that people may have enjoyed what Mark did with Robo-Hunter, but if they know the character before they can't possibly have enjoyed what he's done to it because it's not the same character. The only thing the same is the name.

AH: *You're presuming it's the same readers, though.*

ALAN: The same, but fewer.

AH: *You've dropped* L.E.G.I.O.N. *recently, and there's rumors that you'll soon be leaving the Demon.*

ALAN: I had a health scare last year, and it made me realize that I can drop down dead at any moment with no warning. I brought a certain amount of reality into the fantasy work in which I as a comic writer live. If I was going to die tomorrow, how would I want to leave the world? One of the first things I did was apologize to Robin Smith and make up a quarrel that had lasted about 18 months, a quarrel I started.

My doctor said that I had to cut down my workload by 50%. I was writing four monthly titles, and probably the easiest two to write were *L.E.G.I.O.N.* and Lobo, and the hardest, *Batman* and *The Demon*. I dropped *L.E.G.I.O.N.* knowing that Barry Kitson was quite keen to take over. We'd been coplotting for the past two and a half years, and I knew I was leaving it in safe hands, so I decided to drop that and keep Lobo. I figured I would drop *The Demon*, which has always been a hard comic to write, and I kind of resigned, and then went back to doing it again.

The way it's worked out is that Matt Wagner is drawing a fill-in, and then I'm back with Val Semeiks for two issues, and then Keith Giffen has plotted an issue that I've dialoged and Val has drawn, and then Dwayne McDuffie is doing a three-parter. After that I'm back for another five-part story with Val that's the quest for the Eternity Book.

AH: *What's the Eternity Book?*

In August, the four-issue mini-series *Lobo: Infanticide* premieres.

ALAN: It's Merlin's book of spells, and it's rumored that somewhere in there is a spell that Jason and the Demon can use to free themselves from each other, although I can tell you right now that there isn't. Well, not one without a catch.

AH: *Do you find the Demon's rhyming dialog very difficult to write?*

ALAN: I find it a challenge, and I only wish my ability with verse was better because I do look back to some of the verse by Alan Moore and Matt Wagner, and I think that mine is light in comparison. Mind you, at the same time I read one with theirs and by the time I've read four pages of really fat word balloons, I'm glad to get back to my three lines with a quick laugh on the punchline.

AH: *So you'll be a regular fixture on* The Demon.

ALAN: Yes, semi-regular. If my daughter has anything to do with it, though, I'll be doing *The Demon* full time and giving up *Batman*.

AH: *Do you have ambitions to write for any other media?*

ALAN: I have absolutely no ambitions to write anything except comics. I don't want to write a book, short stories, for television or for movies. I just want to write comics. Maybe it's very unadventurous of me, but it's what I like.

AH: *Are you not now working on a Judge Dredd film script, though?*

ALAN: Yeah, because it's too good an opportunity to pass over. I'm doing it because I was asked. If I fail, that's okay and it's not like it's the end of my life if I fail because I never wanted to do it in the first place. John Wagner and I were talking earlier with Paul Pender, who adapted the Bogie Man for the BBC, and we have high hopes of selling him the next two Bogie Man projects, and we've told him we would like to have a crack at adapting one of them just to see if we can do it. I think that if we did it successfully John might like to move over. He would make a great TV sitcom writer.

AH: *Having already transcribed the first part of this interview, you come over as a rather mercenary individual. It's amazing how often the subject of money comes up.*

ALAN: Not so, Frank. See, I've been through the transcript and edited out all mention of money except for the poor deal we got from the BBC. And I only whine about that because everyone else involved in the TV production will make far more than we will out of it. For anyone who thinks I've cheated, the missing monetary

AN *AMAZING HEROES* EXCLUSIVE! Unpublished art from *The Wisdom of Lobo*.

mentions touch on 1) the possibility of editors being so bad because they're paid so poorly, and 2) the wisdom or otherwise in giving up *The Demon* which sells about 70,000 monthly, to continue with *Batman: Shadow of the Bat*, which is likely to sell just a tad more.

AH: *How much do you love the characters you work on?*

ALAN: That depends on their bankability. Ha ha. Actually, I'm very lucky right now to be able to work on a bunch of characters that I do like so much. Believe me, there are places in Hell better than having to write *Manix-The World's First Robot Secret Agent*, or *Shadow—Police Dog*, or *Hard Man's Game*, about Rugby Union, about which John and I knew nothing at all.

AH: *You actually wrote all those strips?*

ALAN: Yes, in our early days.

AH: *I'd like to talk to you about the way the Lobo Christmas package was solicited as featuring 48 pages of never-before-seen material under the title* The Wit and Wisdom of Lobo, *which when the purchaser had paid their $27 turned out to be 48 blank pages. Ho, ho, ho.*

ALAN: I didn't think it was very funny. I think the fans were shafted, but I know how it happened. The editor of Lobo, Dan Raspler, was staying with me after the UK Comic Art convention last year when he got a phone call from DC to tell him that *Lobo's Greatest Hits* and *Lobo: The Last Czarnian* were both ready and the slipcase had been printed up, but when the two books were inserted into the slipcase, they rattled around because there was a quarter-inch too much space. Whoever sized the books with the slipcase got it wrong. Keith and I could have written something really quickly and Simon could have drawn it if he'd dropped everything else, but when we called DC back and put this to them we were told that it was already too late; the package had to be with the binder within seven days.

Somebody, and I don't know who it was, had the idea of doing "The Wit and Wisdom of Lobo" as 48 blank pages. Ever since, I have been getting hell from every Lobo fan I meet who feels they've been cheated out of money, and I sympathize with them entirely. I know how hard it is for people to raise the sort of cash asked for the Lobo package. This is one of the dangers of having marketing-led comics.

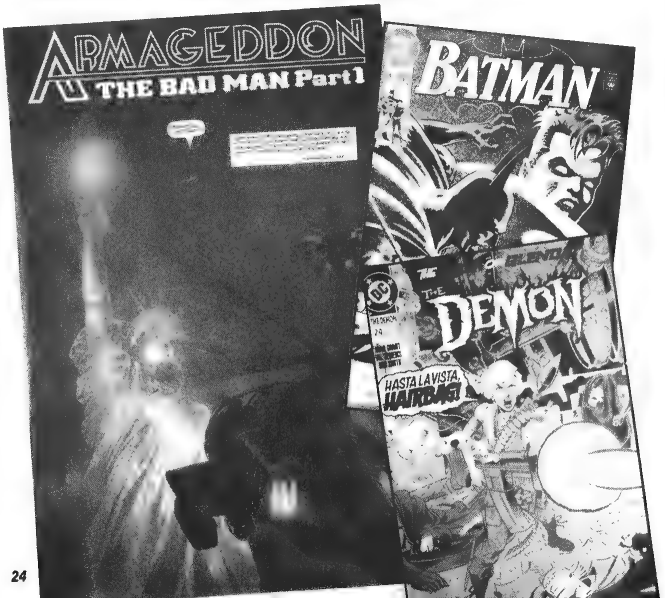
AH: *We talked earlier about* Judgement On Gotham *being very successful, but at that point you didn't know that it had been voted by your peers as the best graphic novel of 1991 in the UK Comic Art Awards. What are your feelings on that?*

ALAN: I don't really believe in awards. I'm gratified to receive an award, but I find it really difficult to say that so-and-so is the best writer or that's the best graphic novel. Honestly, I don't believe in awards.

AH: *The conventional interview closer is to ask if there's any particular character you'd still like to be working on?*

ALAN: I was talking to the guys from Bastard Bunny yesterday and we talked about a Bastard Bunny and Lobo team-up, and I'm quite up for that idea. There aren't any others that I hanker after. I've been lucky enough to get to write Batman, Judge Dredd, and Lobo, with the prospect of Wolverine with Sam Kieth coming up. Even a rather mercenary individual like me can't ask for anything more. ●

And that's not all! A few of Alan Grant's other projects, past, current, and future.



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WITH THESE RINGS...

An Examination of the G.L. Universe

AND ACROSS CALHOWAY-STATES
AS A TELEVISION EXECUTIVE, ALAN SCOTT HAS ENOUGH POWER IN THIS STATE TO GET SOME MONEY AND FAVORS FROM THE PROPER AUTHORITIES
BUT, CHUCKLES, THE RED TAPE IS TOO FASTEN AS THE GREEN LANTERN!

"In brightest day,
in blackest night,
no evil shall escape my sight.
Let those who
worship evil's might,
Beware my power—
Green Lantern's light!"

With that stirring oath, Hal Jordan, a man without fear, charged his only weapon, the amazing power ring, and gave voice to his lifelong mission—to challenge and conquer evil wherever it lurks. With the power ring, he became one of the most powerful super-heroes Earth and the universe have ever seen.

The awesome responsibility of wielding a power ring is shared by dozens of individuals across the galaxy, known collectively as the Green Lantern Corps. To qualify for the Corps, created by the near-omnipotent Guardians of the Universe, one must be essentially good, courageous and possess indomitable willpower.

On the planet Earth, three exceptional men possess those necessary traits to be Green Lanterns. The valiant and resourceful Hal Jordan, whose exploits have become legend; the sensitive and intellectual John Stewart, who always persevered despite adversity; and the arrogant and impetuous Guy Gardner, whose fighting spirit cannot be crushed.

For a time, only Hal's adventures were chronicled in the pages of *Green Lantern*. Then, after John was given a brief showcase, the Green Lantern Corps took over the focus until the title and the Corps were cancelled. Hal resumed his solo status in *Action Comics Weekly* until that ended and just about left him in limbo.

New World Order

About two years ago, *Green Lantern* #1 premiered featuring Hal Jordan (now sporting streaks of gray hair) and the other two Green Lanterns of Earth. The title's first epic-length adventure (now available in the *Green Lantern: The Road Back* trade paperback) teamed the three and established the series' direction and destiny.

From that point, the three would rotate for the lead with occasional issues starring all of them. Hal's primary mission was recruiting new members for the reinstated GL Corps; Guy was named the official Green Lantern of Earth's sector in Hal's stead; and John became the guardian of Oa, which had become a patchwork world populated with numerous communities from a variety of planets.

But now, the assemblage of the Green Lantern Corps is complete and Hal Jordan wants his old job back. In *GL* #25, Hal and Guy duked it out for the right to be the Green Lantern of Sector 2814—*the* Green Lantern of Earth.

It was a rough and ragged fight. The older, experienced Jordan vs. the younger, meaner Gardner. Both wanted the sector, both wanted to pound the other's head in—but while both came close to claiming victory, the final outcome couldn't be in doubt.

Hal resumed his natural role and Guy suffered perhaps the most ignominous defeat of his career. For not only did the loser agree to relinquish his claim on Sector 2814, he would secede from the Green Lantern Corps.

Major League Expansion

With that, Hal won the right to have the *Green Lantern* title to himself after having to share for so long. "It's hard to develop running storylines, running subplots, 'real life' plots—romance and all that—when you've got three protagonists that you have to keep touching base with," *GL* writer Gerard Jones commented. "It's hard to focus and I think it's time to look at Hal and his friends, his women and stuff like that."

Current *GL* editor Kevin Dooley explained that the scenario was originally created by former editor Andy Helfer, who "wanted to build an empire out of *Green Lantern* the way he had built and empire out of *Justice League*." When *Green Lantern* was slated to return after its long absence, Helfer decided to have Hal, John, and Guy share the book with the intention of eventually giving each their own title.

In April, John's solo comic premiered. *Green Lantern: Mosaic* features concepts started in the "Mosaic" storyline in *GL* # 14-17. John's mission on Oa, to protect and bring order to its citizens, is explored in greater depth and detail by writer Gerard Jones with artists Cully Hamner and Dan Panosian.

Guy debuts twice in solo action. In May, the three-issue prestige format *Guy Gardner: Reborn* premiered, featuring Guy's quest for power. Following its completion, he'll have his own ongoing title by *Reborn*'s team of Jones and Joe Staton.

Rounding off the emerald expansion is a new title called *Green Lantern Corps Quarterly*, inspired by Andy Helfer's appreciation of the organization's adventures. "He liked stories, not just about Hal and not just about Guy," Dooley told. "He wanted stories about strange and weird aliens."

Lord of the Rings

Despite interest in the Corps' comings and goings, most readers were, and continue to be, concerned with Hal Jordan. Even when surrounded by the Corps, who essentially did the same things he did, Hal stood out.

"Readers can identify with him, identify with the things that are going through his head. Like when he and Green Arrow were looking for America. They were two characters who were playing off each other.

"Now he's by himself and the personal situations we're going to put him in are going to make Hal an even stronger character. The fact that there are a bunch of other Green Lanterns around doesn't lessen the fact that Hal is a very, very strong character."

Jones described Hal as "the old, battered warrior" in light of the fact that Hal, in a post-Crisis context, is the first major super-hero, having been around longer than Superman

by Darwin McPherson

and Batman. "He's the old warrior who's seen it all and nothing fazes him too much, not even being about to be killed.

He continued, "He's the one with the real tactical information and the very strong will. Doesn't question himself anymore. There was a phase he went through, but now he's gotten past that; he's accepted things as they are."

For the most part, Hal's recent adventures took place in space because, as Dooley stated, "There are a lot of readers who think he should be cosmic. The Green Lantern Corps itself is a cosmic idea." But now he'll be more earthbound because both the editor and writer prefer an Earthly setting.

Jones admitted, "He'll have to have an occasional space story, but really, there's not much you can do in space. They're fun occasionally, but if you want to maintain things like a regular supporting cast and familiar venues for the characters to operate... it's very hard to do that if the guy is roaming around all the time."

Coming Distractions

Beginning in *GL* #26, the "Evil Star Rising" trilogy starts. It involves the return of Evil Star, an old *GL* supervillain who, with the help of his subservient little Starlings, wants to regain his power—lost at the hands of Green Lantern.

Also lurking about are three new villains called Jocasta, Piston, and Repo. They, along with Evil Star, are in league with long-time *GL* nemesis Goldface.

Evil Star decides to go after Green Lantern's power—specifically the power battery. By issues #28, "the battery gets stolen," Dooley told. "Hal has to get back the battery without his Green Lantern powers. The way he does it, against all these super-villains is tremendously cool." He added, "It's a slugfest galore, kids."

Issue #29 features the return of a character from the John Broome/Gil Kane days—Olivia Reynolds. For those unversed in *GL* lore, Dooley explained, "When Hal Jordan was a toy salesman, Olivia Reynolds was a salesman for a rival toy company and she got into a sexy suit to sell the toys. She would sell the toys better than Hal would, using her feminine wiles."

Hal's trouble with girls is almost legendary and it won't stop there. He's already involved in a complicated relationship with Carol Ferris, his longtime love who's still recovering from an extended possession by the evil Star Sapphire spirit.

Jones says, "They are... just friends for awhile, but there's clearly an attraction. I think Hal is strongly attracted to her and she's a little leery of everything. Having been Star Sapphire and wanting to humiliate and dismember him for a while sort of puts a strain on their relationship."

Hal's starting his own business, a small aircraft company, and Carol will be working for him. Jones said, "They will be trying to co-exist as friends who are attracted to each other."

Further complications will arise as Arisia, a fellow Green Lantern and exsweetheart now living on Earth, comes back into Hal's life "just when it seems like they're about to get together," Jones said. "This Hal/Carol thing, there are going to be distractions for them. We'll have some fun."

Tragic Hero

Not as much fun are the precarious predicaments in which former architect John Stewart often finds himself. His recent life has been wracked with tragedy and turmoil.

It began in *Action Comics Weekly* #601 when Star Sapphire killed his wife and fellow Green Lantern, Katma Tui. Ever since, crisis and controversy seemed to follow him every where. First, people died indirectly because of his actions and he was unfairly imprisoned.

Then the greatest tragedy. In *Cosmic Odyssey* #2, John arrogantly and ignorantly caused the deaths of a planetful of people on an alien world. Guilt and remorse overtook him and threatened to never let go.

Over the course of the recent *Green Lantern* series, John has been a pawn and a puppet in the hands of the Guardians of the Universe and the renegade Guardian called Old Timer. The Old Timer recreated Oa as a mosaic; cities from dozens of worlds were forcibly taken and transplanted with their citizens on Oa.

Jordan's relation with Ferris is somewhat complicated by her (as Star Sapphire) having tried to humiliate and dismember him.

When the Guardians reestablished order, it was John's job to keep the peace between the diverse and often hostile cultures until the communities could be returned to their native planets. When he learned the mosaic was all an experiment that the Guardians had no intention of ending, he agreed to stay and help build peace.

"John is the intellectual of the bunch," Jones said in comparing him with Hal and Guy. "John is the one who reads books and can quote people. Consequently, he weighs the moral result of what he does to an extent that no other super-hero I know does. Occasionally, this'll stall him but it's never going to paralyze him.

"I'm making him a much more active, interactive, confrontational super-hero. But he's on a very bizarre world. He's constantly trying to figure out what's going on. The Mosaic world is a very disorienting place."

A Different World

There are so many cultures to deal with on Mosaic that "it's not going to be boring," Dooley promised. "it's going to be fascinating when John has to deal with, say, a culture that has no idea what violence is running into a culture that is nothing but violence. Or a culture that thinks that the air is God and John comes in there and is breathing in their god."

The editor told that Jones "typed up an over 60-page bible in which he talks all about the different cultures and alien things on Mosaic. I mean, it is just amazing.

"Such things as the Fortress People of Fwang to the Berserkers, the Hordivores, the Pan, the Threeways—yes, the Threeways are exactly what you thing they are, but we will handle them very well in a Code book. There's the Wee, the Hungries, the Ubermensch, the Twittering Machines, the Sabrinas... there's just tons."

Dooley and Jones estimate that there are over 40 different species listed in the bible; however, Jones didn't list every single one. "I wanted the freedom to surprise people with something and surprise myself," he said. The bible is insurance that he'd "always have something to provoke some ideas."

Yet the writer doesn't seem to be at a loss for ideas at this stage. "In *Mosaic*, I'm trying to do something that hasn't been done. I'm trying to bring in a lot of oddball, intellectual content. I've tried to push my own style and my own handling of material in a way I never have, and I'm willing to take some chances."

The more thoughtful, philosophical approach is immediately noticable in *Mosaic*. The scripting is clearly on a higher plane; it's more analytical, more introspective— like John Stewart himself.

"It's a real gamble," Jones said, acknowledging the reception the experimental treatment could get. However, both Jones and Dooley are confident *Mosaic* will find a strong audience despite its substantial intellectual tone.

Jones admitted, "There'll be action at times, but even the action I want to give a vaguely surreal slant or an oddball slant. In issue #3, John Stewart fights Sinestro for the whole issue, although it's actually Sinestro's soul—which is trapped inside John's soul—so it's an internal slugfest. But there is visual action, too."

The first issue of *Mosaic* reintroduced the concept and John. The second returned former GL Corpsmen Ch'p and Salakk to the fray as Ch'p and John faced a yellow menace on Oa's roads. Future issues will continue to focus the gradual interaction and integration of the mosaic's cultures and customs.

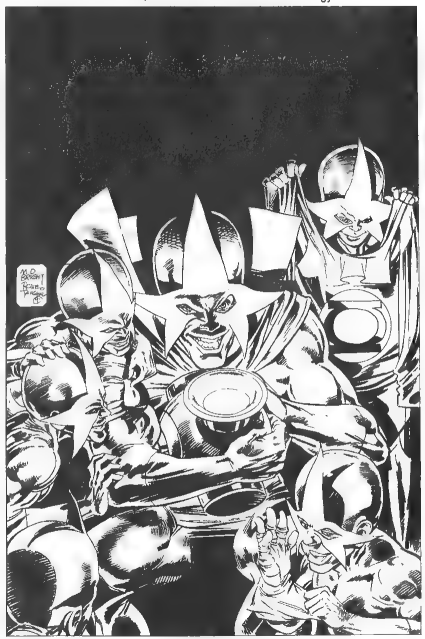
Good Guys Wear Green

And then there's Guy Gardner. He's lost the power ring and turned his back on the Corps. Dooley said, "Guy is going to realize that all throughout his entire career—at least as a Green Lantern—that he has been defined by his ring. That people have always said, 'Without your ring, you're nothing. You're just a guy (ha ha). Without it, you're just another schlub, there's nothing special about you.'"

"Guy is very much into himself and into proving himself," Jones explained. Even after losing the ring, "Guy is still trying to show that he is the best, or at least can compete with the big guys. He's always going to continue to overreact.

"Although what I've been doing with Guy lately is trying to get back in touch with his different selves. What we set up is: Guy was kind of a jerk as a young man, given to temper tantrums and so on. Then he forcibly seized control of himself and became almost too nice a guy in early adult-

Cover to *Green Lantern* #28, the final issue of the Evilstar trilogy.



Mosaic stars the intellectual Green Lantern, John Stewart.

hood, back when he was a gym teacher and a prison counselor. Then when he got bopped on the head, an exaggerated version of his earlier self came out."

The writer continued, "So now he's trying to integrate all this and he's getting into this 'Who am I?' thing. Not at a drippy level, but just trying to get a sense of himself and his lifelong changes of identity. So Guy's development will "play for humor," but he's genuinely going to give him a bit more depth. It won't reach the level of the old *Justice League*, he said, "but Guy is a character that needs a funny touch."

Power Hungry

The prestige format *Guy Gardner: Reborn*, which picks up immediately after *GL* #25, starts with Guy trying to find out if he can be a hero without the ring. "He's going to find out that he can succeed just so far, but he needs something special," Doley told. "I mean, yeah, he is just a schlub."

The first issue showed Guy leaving the Justice League and beginning his search for that special something. He looked up the New Guardians (remember them?), but his charms left something to be desired.

Then he armed himself to the degree that he made "the Punisher look like he's got cap guns," Dooley claimed. He started okay, but . . . well, the Punisher *is* only a comic book character, right?

Finally, Guy realized that he needs to be a hero who doesn't need weapons. So he asked himself who can teach him to be the baddest good guy without gimmicks. One word came to mind, Dooley said.

"Lobo."

The remainder of *Guy Gardner: Reborn* features Guy's efforts to become a hero again with Lobo's help. Then they venture forth across dimensions to accomplish that goal. as the miniseries' title suggests, Guy eventually succeeds but Dooley wouldn't reveal how.

All the editor would say is "He's going to be more powerful than ever before. He's going to be able to kick major butt, but he's not going to be a Green Lantern."

En Gardner!

Reborn segues into an ongoing *Guy Gardner* monthly series. Dooley says the tagline is: "There's going to be a new Guy in town!" He said, "it's not going to be the old Guy and it *is* going to be the old Guy. He's going to be new and improved . . .well, new, not necessarily improved."

Precise plans for the *Guy* monthly are still being set, but Jones has a few ideas. Even though at this point Guy is starting to build an identity for himself separate from the Green Lantern Corps and the Justice League, he's going to form his own group.

Guy's going to gather a "space-faring group of enforcers around himself," Jones said. They're actually a group of aliens trying to put together a good freelance space security force like L.E.G.I.O.N., but more for profit. "They're not very good at what the're doing. They see Guy as a way to give themselves some force," the writer said.

"Guy basically wants to set himself up as the center of his own little miniature Green Lantern Corps." Jones stated, "I hope to have a big storyline at some point in which L.E.G.I.O.N., the Green Lantern Corps, this new thing called Darkstar, and then Guy's group—which will be called Gardners of the Universe—have to figure out whose duty is what."

Darkstar is currently in development under Brian Augustyn's editorship. More details will be revealed in

Guy Gardner's new costume.

upcoming months.

Definitely on the slate is a rematch between Guy and Goldface. Goldface has humiliated Guy twice already—first in *GL* #18, then in *Reborn* #1. "So Guy has a score to settle there," Jones said.

The writer wants to explore the friendship between Guy and Kilowog, which is strained because Kilowog is in the Corps and Guy, of course, is not. "There's going to be some conflict between them," Jones said, "but that will be patched up because I like that friendship a lot."

And what about Guy's love life? "He and Ice is something I have to talk over with (*Justice League America* writer) Dan Jurgens and (*JLA* editor) Brian Augustyn," Jones mentioned. "No plans have been made, but there will be a future between Guy and Ice.

I'm not sure what it'll be; it won't be dropped."

And just because it's *got* to happen, count on another fight between Guy and Hal Jordan.

The Few, the Proud, the Green

The other new title introduced in the Green Lantern promotion was *Green Lantern Corps Quarterly*, whose first issue hit the stands in April. Similar

In *Guy Gardner: Reborn*, Lobo teaches Guy how to be tough without a power ring.

YOU CANNOT HOPE TO WIN— YOU'RE JUST AN OLD MAN, WHEREAS I HAVE BECOME IMMORTAL!
IMMORTAL DAIMONT CLAIMED IMMORTALITY TOO—AND I BEAT WHY? WE'RE ALL IMMORTAL UNTIL WE DIE
YOU SHALL DIE, LANTERN! I WILL REACH THAT POWER RING FROM YOUR SMOLDERING CORPSE!
THIS RING AND I HAVE BEEN TOGETHER 5 EONS I'VE DIAMOND AS OF 3 EONS TO KNOW EACH OTHER PRETTY WELL
OH? SOON I'LL HAVE THE STRONG RING REGION IN MY NAME THE LAWS OBEYS!
AND I'LL BE TAKING THAT RING, TOO!

Alan Scott vs. Hector Hammond in the fourth GL title, *Green Lantern Corps Quarterly*.

to *Justice League Quarterly*, it has regular and rotating features with room for stand-alone stories. the latter, of course, featuring the vaunted adventures of various Green Lantern Corps members.

The first regular feature is "Alan Scott," named, naturally, for its star who's also known as the Golden Age Green Lantern. Written by Roger Stern and drawn by Dusty Abell, Scott's adventures take place in the present. His second story reunites him with his children, Jade and Obsidian.

The second feature is Kevin Dooley's personal favorite, "G'Nort," and will be handled by Scott Lobdell, writer and Joe Staton, artist. G'Nort and his sidekick, Sax Girl, "will be tooling around not only Earth, but the universe in subsequent issues," Dooley said.

The first rotating feature is "Whatever Happened to. . .?" in which the whereabouts of old Green Lantern Corps members is explored. This feature was created because the *GL* offices receive lots of mail inquiring about old favorites. Some of those characters will appear in *Green Lantern: Mosaic*, and "Whatever Happened to: . .?" should account for the rest.

The first "Whatever Happened To. . .?" premiered in April and starred Arisia.

The other rotating feature is "The History of Sector 2814." "What we're going to do is go back through the ages and we're going to be able to see who has been Green Lantern on Earth throughout the ages," Dooley explained. "The Green Lanterns have been around for eons, so there just might be a possibility that Oog, back in the year 20 million B.C., was a Green Lantern."

The first "History" debuts in *GLCQ* #2 and will probably be written by Gerard Jones. (The editor added that he knows there weren't cavemen around 20 million B.C.; he was just hyperbolizing.)

Other GLC stories filling out the anthology "will be by top names in the industry doing really boffo things," Dooley promised. Doug Moench and Paul Gulacy, who had a story in the first issue, have already done another one which will probably be in the third issue. On tap for a future issue is Rich Hedden of *Roachmill* fame.

DC and Me

In recent times, continuity has become more important in the DC Universe and links between most DC superhero titles have developed. John isn't as heavily involved, but with Guy and Hal both being connected with Justice League International, cross-pollination is inevitable.

Though Guy left the Justice League in *Reborn* #1, he's going to be determined to rejoin and "he's going to want to be the leader," Dooley said. He always wanted it, but men more powerful than Guy like the Martian Manhunter and Superman always held the job.

But now, "he's going to be, he just might be, as powerful as Superman. Or at least he'll think he is," Dooley said. "He's going to want a major role in leading the Justice League. As to whether or not Superman and Maxwell Lord are going to let him have it. . .that's something that's going to take place in the *Guy Gardner* regular series or in *Justice League America*."

At this point, Hal is the leader of Justice League Europe. his role there will reflect in his own book and vice versa; after all, Gerard Jones is the writer of both. And since Kevin Dooley edits both *Aquaman* and Green Lantern and both are in the Justice League, he expects to do a crossover between the two sooner or later.

There's a more certain crossover between Green Lantern and the Flash in *GL* #30 and 31 and *Flash* #69 and 70, written by Jones and Mark Waid, respectively. The Emerald Gladiator and Scarlet Speedster switch villains as they face Gorilla Grodd and Hector Hammond.

Also appearing are Rex the Wonder Dog and Detective chimp. They're involved in a group called the Bureau of Amplified Animals, "where the various creatures who have one way or another been evolved into hyper-intelligence, like Rex, have been pulled together by the U.S. Government to help with fighting animal bad guys like Grodd," Jones explained.

"We're not treating it too seriously . . ." Jones said. The whole thing was Mark Waid's idea. He had no idea it would go this far. "I was just joking," he claimed.

Continuity is King

"All of the Green Lantern Universe is going to have very tight continuity," Dooley told. "The books will be able to stand on their own, but it'll add a lot more to the reader's overall enjoyment of the story if they pick them all up." *Green Lantern*, *Mosaic*, and *Guy Gardner* will follow the same timeline, so they can periodically intersect.

"With the first stretch of six or seven isues, I don't expect to do much tying in," Jones said. "I want to get them all set up as separate identities for a while, to really flesh them out." Hal shows up in *Mosaic* #5; however, it won't be too relevant in his own title.

One relevant inter-GL event, Jones says, "Is the return of Sinestro, which I've teased at in the *Greeen Lantern* series thus far. Sinestro's spirit is trapped inside John Stewart's mind, so the Sinestro soul is going to break out in *Mosaic*. Then it's going to pop up and hassle Guy in *Reborn*. And Sinestro will finally reappear in the flesh in *Green Lantern*."

Guy and Hal, along with Carol, play pertinent parts in this year's summer annual crossover, *Eclipso: The Darkness Within*, featuring that supervillain. Each is "eclipsed," that is, they're possessed by a black diamond like Eclipso's. When that happens, Dooley explained, "you have to live out your deepest, darkest revenge fantasy."

In *Green Lantern Annual* #1, written by Jones, pencilled by Andy Smith and inked by John Beatty, Eclipso targets Hal for possession because he's one of Earth's most powerful heroes. And through Eclipso's prodding, Star Sapphire returns.

Following directly after *Reborn* #3, Guy appears in *Eclipso: The Darkness Within*. He also plays a vital part in this year's *Adventures of Superman Annual*, where something happens which will, Dooley says, "have a direct effect in a weird, kind of funny way to *Guy Gardner* #1."

August Personage in Jade

"Gerry Jones is writing *everything* that DC produces," Dooley proclaimed. While he may be exaggerating a tad there, it doesn't seem like he's too far off. In addition to the three "GL's" for DC, Jones is writing *Justice League Europe* and the *Batman: Run Riddler Run* mini-series; for Marvel, he's writing *Wonder Woman*.

He's also committed to write various miniseries. "That's going to stop," Jones said. "That'll help a little bit. . .but something's got to give."

To alleviate some of the workload, Jones's friend and frequent collaborator Will Jacobs will co-write *Guy Gardner* with him at some point. "He'll do some dialoguing and we'll find a way to divide the work," Jones said.

But "the GL stuff comes pretty quickly because as I've written it for a couple of years, I've been piling up storylines I want to do. . . character bits to do," Jones admitted. "I've got this big backlog of ideas in my head."

Most of the titles Jones writes are important to him. Some of them he would call his "baby" for different reasons. *Green Lantern* because "I have these strong nostalgic connections to Hal Jordan and it's fun to be in charge of the character." He likes *Mosaic* because his creative output isn't hampered by either editorial or self-imposed expectations.

But his "baby of babies" is his co-creation with Will Jacobs—*The Trouble With Girls*. Jones wants to see the adventures of Lester Girls continue, after the conclusion of the four-issue mini-series form Marvel/Epic with art by Bret Blevins and Al Williamson. Keep those fingers and toes crossed.

Green Teams

Starting with issue #26, Mark Bright and Romeo Tanghal become the regular artists on *Green Lantern*. Regular GL readers will remember them as the team on the John Stewart segments of the rotating *GL* and from the highly successful and popular *GL: Emerald Dawn* miniseries.

Pencilling *Mosaic* is newcomer Cully Hamner, whom Dooley discovered at the San Diego comic convention. Hamner's style differs considerably from typical super-hero art, but is uniquely suited for *Mosaic*'s alien setting. Inking chores are being handled by Dan Panosian.

Pencilling both *Reborn* and *Guy Gardner* is long-time GL artist Joe Staton, who drew Guy's portion in the rotating feature. Joe Rubinstein is inking the prestige series; however, the inker of the regular book has yet to be named.

The promotional push for Green Lantern and his compatriots has already begun. Local comic shops may still have some of the free Green Lantern Corps rings given away with *Mosaic* #1. The rings can be obtained by subscribing through DC.

Other neat GL merchandise now on sale is: *Green Lantern: The Road Back* trade paperback, reprinting *GL* #1-8; a Mosaic poster by Hamner and Panosian; a Green Lantern symbol T-shirt from Graphitti; another GL T-shirt with art by John Byrne; and the Green Lantern/Green Arrow Collection, reprinting classic GL by Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams.

It's not just another three-ring circus, it's the beginning of an exciting new era in the Green Lantern universe.

Just remember, in brightest day, in blackest night, let no Green Lantern comic escape your sight. ●

"The History of Sector 2814" will go back through the ages and show previous GLs.

the LONELYman
GERARD JONES - WRITER
TIM HAMILTON - PENCILLER
GARY TOP - INKER
ALBERT DE GLOSNEY - LETTERER
STEVE HARTBURN - COLORIST
KEVIN DOOLEY - EDITOR
T'S A CLEAN SHOT THE GUNT THAT HE COULD HAVE MADE...
...BEFORE...
NOW HOWEVER SAVED CANNOT HAVE WORN HIS HAND BEFORE, AND AS A MONTH'S VENGEAN BECKONS AWAY HE CANNOT EVEN CARE

BATMAN REVISITED

A Look Behind the Scenes of the Creaton of the TV Show

Remember the shock wave when Michael Keaton was cast as Batman? But how would Bat-fans have reacted to Lyle J. Waggoner playing the better half of the dynamic duo? He was the only other actor besides Adam West to screen test "in costume" for the 1966 series. Would the name Burton Bervis (Burt Ward's real name) as Robin have gone over as well with fans?

Hindsight has 20/20 vision, but did anyone foresee the success of *Batman* on the screen? A look at some behind-the-scenes goings-on during the production of the 1966 television series, indicates that Batman's creator Bob Kane did.

The resurrection of *Batman* on the television screen in 1966 came about when a Hollywood exec was in the audience at the Chicago Playboy Mansion where Hefner was screening the 1940s *Batman* serials. Bob Kane recalled in *Batman & Me*, "The Bunnies and Hugh were so enthusiastic about the old serials that the agent went back to ABC and said, 'You ought to see what's going on at the Playboy Club every Saturday night. Why don't we try something like that?' And that's how the show originated."

At first Kane was concerned that the show would be another low-budget fiasco until he hear Twentieth Century-Fox Television had chosen William Dozier to oversee. Dozier was the former director of network programs at CBS television and producer of *Playhouse 90* and *Studio One*. His new company, Greenway Productions was already producing *The Loner*, a Rod Serling concept western starring Lloyd Bridges, and *The Tammy Grimes Show.*.

Kane wrote to Dozier, "It seems Batman has caught his second wind and is 'red hot' now. Judging from the many articles and unsolicited tributes being paid to us this year, I am sure that it will burn up the TV tubes when my 'cult' of Batman fans tune in. I really feel this is breaking at a most opportune time." Mr. Kane closed his letter, "Bats Wishes."

Skepticism ran high, however, when Kane heard that the first episode would feature the Riddler. Kane would have preferred using the Joker for the first show. In a letter he told Dozier, "The Joker is by far the better known villain to my fans and is truly the archenemy of Batman, such as Dr. Moriarty is to Sherlock Holmes. In fact, the Joker was the one who created 'riddles' for Batman to solve. In a sense he was the original Riddler and to my my thinking is the wildest and most bizarre-looking villain of them all.

"I can picture him in color, with his chalk white face, green hair and blood-red lips—a combination to chill the most ardent mystery lovers. I can only hope that you use him in future scripts." Dozier could only placate Kane with the fact that the fifth episode would be a "Joker" show.

Charles Fitzsimons, William Dozier's assistant and now President of the Producers Guild said, "*Batman* was an enormous smash and the thing that was parlayed in *Batman* really was the villains."

Two major villains confront Batman in the new *Batman Returns*. Danny DeVito is the Penguin. Kane created the Penguin after seeing a cute penguin in Kool cigarette ad in the '40s. Penguins reminded Kane of little fat men in tuxedoes, "so that was how I drew the Penguin. His waddle pudginess, and short stature made him a more cartoony character than my other villains, but he was a killer and a formidable foe nonetheless." Kane says his collaborator Bill Finger invented "The Man of a Thousand Umbrellas" gimmicks the Penguin uses against Batman.

And who doesn't know by now that Sean Young didn't get the Catwoman role? Michelle Pfeiffer plays the female nemesis that was created to give the strip sex appeal. Kane says he had Jean Harlow in mind when he created Catwoman but made her a brunette, "because I thought that black hair would be more slinky and feline than blonde hair." In the comics Catwoman is a criminal but not a killer, somewhat of a friendly foe and a romantic interest for Batman. "We figured that there would be this cat and mouse, cat and bat byplay between them—he would try to reform her and bring her over to the side of law and order."

Batman himself was inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's flying machine called the "Ornithopter." Kane's first experimental sketches of Batman drawn when he was 13 is bordered by a da Vinci quote. "Remember that your bird should have no other model than the *bat.*" *The Mark of Zorro* with Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., gave him the idea of the bat-cave and secret identity. In his memoirs Kane admits that Bill Finger wrote most of the great stories and helped create part of the bat mystique. But Finger never got a byline.

In 1966 Kane expressed his reservations in correspondence with Dozier. "I read the shooting script for the pilot and although it is not the mysterious and grim Batman that I have lived with all these years, I realize that your version is an updated 'camp style' that is in keeping with todays TV market a la *James Bond* and *U.N.C.L.E.* and that if I were to produce it today, I would do it very much the way you are handling the concept; tongue-in-cheek; along with the pop art feeling.

"The only suggestion I would like to make is perhaps the combination of a bit of the old, mysterious along with the new 'camp style.' This is to say, that when the opportunity in the script affords itself, have a giant shadow silhouette of the Batman cast upon a building or a room, preceding Batman's entrance. I have done this quite a bit in the comic strip and it is quite effective in establishing an eerie mood, especially with appropriate mysterious music for accompaniment. In keeping with a mysterious mood, Batman could bring his cape up around his face when lurking in dark shadows."

You can't argue with success. *Batman* swept the ratings, the theme became a chart topper and Batmania struck. Dozier attempted to offer an explanation. "I think movies like *Cat Ballou*, *The Knack* and the Beatles (Richard Lester's, *A Hard Days Night* 1964, featuring the Beatles, and *The Knack and How To Get It*, 1965) prepared the audience for the 'way out' approach. They set a new tone of humor, a disregard for convention. Also, I think our sense of humor is generally sharper, hipper, earlier in life than it used to be. The humor quotient is high at an ealier age."

In spite of the show's success, Dozier took his share of slings and arrows from the critics. Fueling the criticism were comments by child "authority" Dr. Benjamin Spock. "We're doing television for the public, not the critics," said Dozier. "I think TV has to have a whipping boy for the critics who are erudite, or think they are, and who think all the shows should be erudite. *The Beverly Hillbillies* was the whipping boy a couple of years ago. Now it's *Batman*. They say it has set TV back 10 years—well maybe so, but it's entertaining millions of people. As for the criticism that it incites youngsters to slug one another and yell 'POW' and 'WHAM', I suspect they'd do it anyway but just not yell 'POW' and 'WHAM'."

In his correspondence to Dozier Dr. Spock admitted criticizing the show "sight unseen." With professional detachment, Dr. Spock wrote, "All I said in an interview was that a number of parents and professional people have told me that pre-school children react to *Batman* by becoming physically abusive with each other. I've heard if often enough so that I'm sure it's true. I don't see why it would make any difference whether I look at the program." It doesn't leave much doubt as to what he'd say about the Dark Knight today.

Luckily, Kane was asked to be on board as a project consultant for the Guber/Peters Warner Brothers movie in 1989. He had visited the sets of the serials and the TV show but never had a hand in the production. In the end Tim Burton's *Batman* was closer to the creator's original vision than anything before it. It took 50 years but when *Batman* was released it immediately broke all records and sits fourth on *Variety*'s list of box office champs. Bat-fans await Batman's return this summer and the inevitable introduction of Robin in a third installment down the road. ●

by Duane S. Arnott

HARVEYS '92

Coming At You!

by Heidi "Ace" MacDonald

As is our annual tradition, we have once again gathered a semi-distinguished panel of experts to put their reputations on the line to predict this year's Harvey Award winners. Past polls have been inconsistent at best, but that hasn't stopped our panel.

This year's prognosticators span the spectrum of animal, vegetable, and mineral: Tommy Taters, tuber hero of cult classic It's a Potato*; science experiment gone awry, Braggadoom, the Mountain that Walks Like a Man; dairy products gone bad, Milk and Cheese; and, as always, token meat puppets Heidi "Ace" MacDonald and the Eighth Wonder of the World, Mr. James Brown.*

ACE: Well, gang, here we are again, or at least Braggadoom, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Taters are here. Milk and Cheese haven't arrived yet, but I'm sure they just got caught in traffic. Before we begin, does anybody have any observations on the state of comics in general in 1991?

TOMMY TATERS: Ronald Perelman is taking over the world. Hope there will always be a place for basic starches.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: Bah! You puny mortals shall yet quake before the wrath of *Braggadoom*!

JAMES BROWN: It's great to be free. I've been travelling this great country of ours and I have just one thing to say: Don't be a dropout!

ACE: Amen to that. Anyway, moving right along, for Best Anthology we have the usual suspects: *Blab, RAW, Taboo, Drawn & Quarterly* and *Dark Horse Presents*.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: *Marvel Comics Presents* was a sad omission, and those responsible shall pay.

ACE: It's interesting to note that each of these titles functions as the flagship of a separate branch of the comics scene. *DHP* contains more straighforward material, with traditional storytelling, while *Taboo* spotlights many of the Tundra stable, with stuff which, if not quite underground, is very dark and gut-level. *RAW*, of course, is very underground and cerebral in a New York/art school vein.

BROWN: These guys came to draw!

ACE: Indeed. *D&Q* has managed to carve out its own niche with the graphic elements of *RAW*, but a bit more down to earth, autobiographical approach. By contrast, *Blab!* doesn't quite have the scope of the others. In fact, it's much more of a boy's club. I think *RAW* will win, even though it's not as influential as it once was, just because of the backlash against *D&Q*'s "I'm picking my nose now" style, and not enough people have seen *Taboo*.

TATERS: Excellence in Biographical/Historical Presentation. Why *Amazing Heroes* not nominated? No one else has Don Rosa Cover Gallery.

BROWN: That Andy Mangels, he's one cool brother.

ACE: *The Comics Journal* usually wins, but Harvey Kurtzman's *From Aargh to Zap!* might win this time, since it's the first broad survey of comic history that's been written with some intelligence. Great pictures, too.

TATERS: Here's my favorite: Special Award for Presentation. Always wanted to meet Production Managers, give them Coke, teach them Harmony. . . .

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: *Maus II* had a hard cover and fought bravely before it yielded to the might of *Braggadoom*.

ACE: But so did my pick, *The Complete Little Nemo*, which merely reprints the most beautiful comic strip of all time.

In the same vein, Best Domestic Reprint is tough to call. Comics as we know them simply couldn't exist without McCay, Crumb, Herriman Sterrett, Raymond and Capp.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: And *Brother Voodo*. Why does no one remember *Brother Voodoo*?

ACE: I'll pick *The Komplete Krazy Kat*, just because *R. Crumb* won last year.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: You labor under a misapprehension. Harvey voters do not spread the vote around. The vote for their favorites, year after year. Thus it is that *Lt. Blueberry* by Moebius must win for Best Foreign Reprint, as his is the name that voters revere.

ACE: *Violent Cases* was one hell of a great book though. People might give it an award because they can't pick it in Best Album Reprint where it's up against *Maus II*. What's good enough for Pulitzer is good enough for a Harvey. Still, my favorite for Best Album Reprint is *Twisted Sisters*, which is not just a terrific anthology, but goes a long way towards showing that women cartoonists are more than just novelties.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: Let us stop wasting time with partisan speeches. For many of these awards it is hardly worth the time of Braggadoom to mention them, since the outcome is scarcely in doubt. For example, Special Achievement in Humor.

TATERS: Look up "humor" in dictionary, there is a picture of a guy with moustache.

ACE: Sergio Aragones is the popular choice. Likewise, for Best Comic Strip, can anyone disagree with *Calvin & Hobbes*?

TATERS: Only a dumb rutabaga would pick anything else.

ACE: Best Inker?

ALL: *Al Williamson!*

ACE: Best colorist?

BROWN: Steve Oliff on *Akira*. That cat can color my world any time.

ACE: Best Letterer is a category that recognizes the unsung heroes of the business. Letterers like Todd Klein and Tom Orzechowski are much more than craftsman—sometimes their lettering is the most artistic thing in the book! Denise Prowell certainly helps give *Xenozoic Tales* that retro look. And Dan Clowes and Dave Sim have taken lettering into new realms as a storytelling device. I always pick Sim, because he's the most imaginative of the bunch, but he'll never win.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: I fear none can halt the rampage of Dan Clowes, as the world is being overrun by negative, surreal cartoons. Whatever became of the good, clean sound of fist upon flesh? Look you upon the New Talent nominees. Is there no one to maintain the majesty of Jim Lee?

ACE: Yeah, there's no clear cut new talent this year. For my money, Sarah Byam is the best writer to break into comics in god knows how long. She's got a great future.

TATERS: Always vote for New Talent who has biggest matchbook collection, myself.

ACE: Whatever gets you through the night, Tommy. Okay, before going on to Best New Comic, I'd like to point out what I feel is the biggest oversight in the nominations: *Rubber Blanket* by David Mazzucchelli and Richmond Lewis.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: Rubber *what*?

TATERS: Someone here have night time flooding mishap?

ACE: See? No one even heard of it. But it was a brilliant book in the *RAW* tradition of expressionism, far and away the most challenging new title which I read all year. Run out and buy a copy! It's beautiful.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: Easy for you to say. . .

ACE: This is a very competitive category. Dave McKean may not be much of a writer, but *Cages* broke new ground in graphic storytelling—the switch from black background to white in the first issue was one of the most amazing, startling and effective devices that I've ever seen.

BROWN: *Grateful Dead Comix* is a real trip.

TATERS: Gave me flashbacks.

ACE: *Lowlife*, *Naughty Bits*, and *Palookaville* are all autobiographical books to some extent, and I think *Palookaville* has the best chance because it made more of a splash than the others, and Seth is a slightly more established talent.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: That puny ant, Brubaker, damaged his chances by whining about being compared to Chester Brown. No such crybabies would stand against *Bragadoom*'s might!

BROWN: I got mine, don't worry about his!

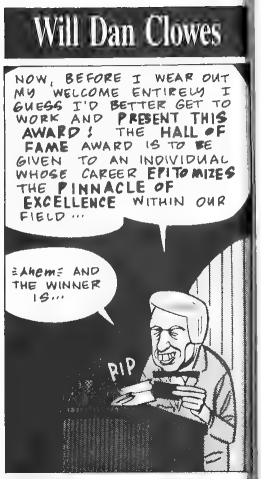
ACE: Well, if the reality books split the vote, then *Cages* might just slip by. Say, where are Milk and Cheese? They promised they'd be here.

TATERS: Heard there was a Paula Abdul concert down the street. Probably dropped by to enjoy diet with MC Scat Cat.

ACE: I suppose I should mention the virtual shutout for *Love & Rockets* in this year's awards. Jaime's lone nomination in the Best Inker category was more absurd than anything else. Braggadoom?

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: Let us not avoid the truth. It's getting old. Who wants to read about a gang of lesbian punks anymore? Punk is dead. Hopey needs to go industrial, learn how to program a drum machine.

BROWN: Yeah, these ministry cats are where it's at now.


Will Dan Clowes
NOW, BEFORE I WEAR OUT MY WELCOME ENTIRELY I GUESS I'D BETTER GET TO WORK AND PRESENT THIS AWARD! THE HALL OF FAME AWARD IS TO BE GIVEN TO AN INDIVIDUAL WHOSE CAREER EPITOMIZES THE PINNACLE OF EXCELLENCE WITHIN OUR FIELD ...
AHEM! AND THE WINNER IS...
RIP
WIN AGAIN???

TATERS: Use power tools to make music. That where it is "at." Stories in *L&R* go on too long. No one remembers the name of Luba's husband anymore.

ACE: Hmm, braggy old bird, I think you're missing the point. Industrial music and Punk are peas in a pod and people will be interested on Maggie, Hopey, and Luba as long as Gilbert and Jaime are great cartoonists, and I don't see any evidence of *that* changing. "Wig Wam Bam," "Poison River," and "Love & Rockets" have been going on for years, literally. What the nominations reflect is that these stories don't have much impact read in eight-page installments. They're very long and very complex, and it's hardly fair to judge them until they're finished and collected. That said, who do we like for Best Writer?

BROWN: That Dan Clowes just cracks me up. He is one funky brother. I wish he'd bring back Ernie Hoyle, though. That little guy really knows how to get funky.

TATERS: Neil Gaiman. Everyone loves *Sandman*.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: Erik Larsen was cheated out of his rightful due here, and I shall not stand idly by while this outrage is perpetrated.

ACE: Neil has the momentum factor going for him here. I'd like to see either Dave Sim or Alan Moore recognized, though. *Cerebus* is completely kicking butt again, and *no one* in comics has the control that Sim does. He was following his master plan when these other guys were reading *Marvel Two-In-One* and wearing short pants. And if one more person asks me, "Whatever Happened to Alan Moore?" I don't know what I'll do. "*From Hell*!" I tell them. "*From Hell*!" *From Hell* is one of the most goddamned frigging brilliant comics of the decade, and Eddie Campbell is still God!

TATERS: Girl, calm down.

ACE: Uh . . . sorry . . .

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: For Best Artist, the criterion is simple . . . Braggadoom picks the man who can draw the best explosions.

TATERS: For flashy, empty look more stock analysts recommend . . . Jim Lee.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: Yet Simon Bisley showcased his talents on the exploits of the mightiest of heroes—Batman.

ACE: It's an uphill struggle if you don't draw Batman, I'll admit. Voters never go for experimentation in this category. Clowes or McKean would be the bold choice, but Mark Schultz represents the traditional alternative. Busty women, fast cars, large dinosaurs, the last exponent of classic draftmanship in the medium . . . Mark Schultz is really what comics are about, in many people's minds.

Finally, Best Cartoonist. I must say I was elated when Julie Doucet was nominated . . . This is the first time a woman was nominated in this category, and when you think about what a boy's club this business has always been, that's quite an achievement.

BROWN: It's a man's man's man's man's world, but it wouldn't be nothing without a woman . . .

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: . . . Or a girl.

TATERS: My eyes tell me this Dan Clowes year.

ACE: Again. Yeah, I wouldn't bet against him, not with stuff like "The Dr. Infinity Story" and "Art School Confidential." What can I say? He's a genius.

TATERS: Like Pepsi, he's a spokesman for a new generation.

ACE: I can't think of a weaker category than Best Graphic Album. With one exception, the choices are—please forgive my bluntness—piss-poor.

TATERS: Batman out wazoo.

ACE: Will Eisner's brilliant *To the Heart of the Storm* would be a classic in any year, but if it doesn't win, we should all riot.

BROWN: Best Single Issue has got to be *Eightball* #6.

ACE: That was outstanding, alrighty. I haven't even mentioned *Hate*, and that's great too, but I'd like to mention a really great issue that wasn't even nominated, *Naughty Bits* #1. "Bitchy Bitch Gets Laid" was a classic, and "Crazy Bitches" was probably the single most important story to appear all year.

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: *Have you taken leave of your senses, girl!*

TATERS: I may be a simple tuber, but you are rockhead, girl!

ACE: Hear me out! Like the story says, "Abuse of women is ingrained in this society." The comics industry is being flooded by stupid comics that brutalize women, and no one ever thinks twice about it. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. It's not much fun when the shoe is on the other foot, is it? Huh? Huh?

BRAGGADOOM—The Mountain That Walks Like a Man: Enough! Best Continuing Series?

ACE: *Eightball* will repeat. It certainly didn't get any worse, and the only book in the competition that really picked up was *Cerebus*, which wouldn't be a bad choice, but I think Clowes has too much momentum. "Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron" makes *Twin Peaks* look like *Jake and the Fatman*.

Will Mark Schultz

BAG A HARVEY?

TATERS: Shaved my Dog just the other day.

ACE: Finally, let's hear everyone's pick for Hall of Fame. JB?

MILK & CHEESE: [*bursting through the door*] All right! this has gone far enough!

MILK: We thought this was supposed to be *The Brady Bunch* reunion. What the hell is going on here?

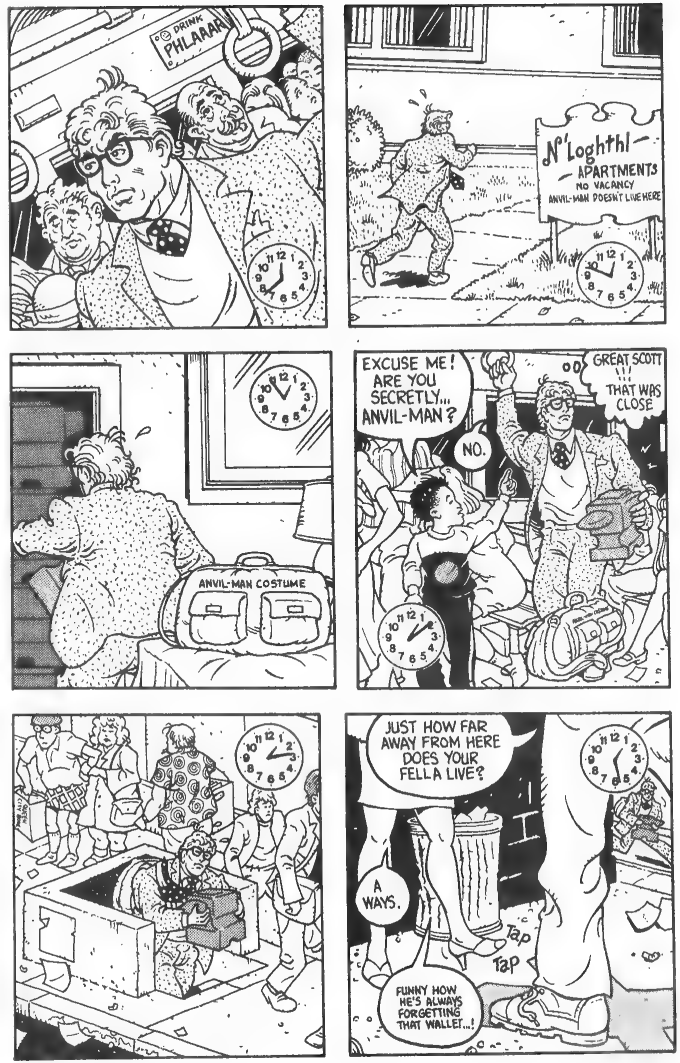
CHEESE: Yeah, what about the fourth basic food group? Losers?

[*Editor's Note: Sadly, the final thoughts of the panelists, on this important category were never recorded. Mr. Brown escaped in a limousine waiting nearby, but Ms. MacDonald and Mr. Taters were slain in the tragic carnage that followed. Braggadoom put up a brave fight before he too succumbed to this savage kill spree. It is to the memory of these noble prognosticators that we dedicate this page of* Amazing Heroes. *Requiescat in pace, old friends, You will be avenged.*]

Milk & Cheese appear courtesy of Evan Dorkin. Milk and Cheese ©*1992 Evan Dorkin. Braggadoom* ©*1992 Marvel Comics. Tommy Taters and Heidi "Ace" MacDonald* ©*1992 Heidi MacDonald. James Brown is Funk Lord of the Universe.* ●

WHENEVER CRIME REARS ITS UGLY HEAD--HE SMOOSHES IT FLAT! HIS WEAPONS: GRAVITY,,, AND GOOD AIM! HE'S A NEW BREED OF SUPERHERO--THE KIND THAT DOESN'T FIGHT UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL! Tom Harrington PRESENTS:
THE UNBEATABLE
ANVIL-MAN
YES! ANVIL-MAN! THE HERO WHO ALWAYS JUST HAPPENS TO BE HOLDING A LARGE WEIGHT OVER THE EDGE OF A ROOF WHENEVER BAD GUYS WALK BY BELOW! FOR YEARS HE'S LOWERED THE BOOM ON MAD SCIENTISTS, WORLD-CONQUERING DESPOTS, AND DEMONS FROM THE PLANET PHLARRRG! HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW HE CAME TO BE?
RIP!!
WELL, YOU CAN KEEP WONDERING! THIS-ISN'T HIS ORIGIN!!
A CLASH OF IDIOTS!
OUR STORY BEGINS AS BIFF THORNE (SECRETLY ANVIL-MAN) AND HIS CLEARLY PLATONIC CO-WORKER MAVIS MILTON LEAVE THEIR GREAT METROPOLITAN ACCOUNTING FIRM FOR A LUNCH DATE!
GEE, MAVIS! I'M HUNGRY ENOUGH TO EAT A HORSE!
I KNOW AN OUTRAGEOUSLY EXPENSIVE BISTRO OVER ON 10TH STREET! THE ONLY PROBLEM IS,,, IT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF,,, THE ALLEY!
TH-THE ... ALLEY? B-BUT,,, THERE ARE MUGGERS IN THERE!
DON'T BE A WORRY-WART, BIFF! ANVIL-MAN WILL PROTECT US! JUST LIKE HE DOES EVERY LUNCH HOUR!
Chip Chip Chip
BUT... I'M ANVIL-MAN!
ADAMANT ADAM-TROY CASTRO--WRITER! / CHARMING CHAS GILLEN--ARTIST! / TIRED TOM HARRINGTON--EDITOR!

ANGST!
CAN'T I EVEN TAKE MY CLEARLY PLATONIC CO-WORKER TO LUNCH WITHOUT HAVING TO FACE... MY DESTINY?
OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE, STOP DROOLING, BIFF! IT'S DISGUSTING!
AND I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE ALWAYS SO SCARED! WE GET MUGGED EVERY SINGLE TIME WE PASS THROUGH THIS ALLEY -- AND EVERY SINGLE TIME ANVIL-MAN SAVES US!
IT'S LIKE HE'S OUR WHADDAYACALL GUARDIAN ANGEL OR SOMETHING!
THAT SO, LADY?
SEE!?!? SEE!!?!?! I KNEW IT WOULD HAPPEN AGAIN! I KNEW IT!!! *snivel*
SHUT UP, BIFF! LISTEN YOU! I HAPPEN TO BE A VERY CLOSE FRIEND OF ANVIL-MAN! SO IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU YOU'LL SURRENDER THAT GUN RIGHT NOW!
was here!
OH, YEAH? WELL IT SO HAPPENS THAT, FOREWARNED BY THE LAST ZOO MUGGERS TO GET BOPPED IN THIS ALLEY, I CHECKED OUT THE ROOFTOPS ONLY FIVE MINUTES AGO--AND ANVIL-MAN AIN'T ANYWHERE IN SIGHT!
© 1992
Chip Wallace
SO HAND OVER THE LOOT, PRONTO!
WELL, I..., er... LEFT MY WALLET IN MY OTHER PANTS! I'M GONNA HAVE TO RUN HOME AND GET IT!
OKAY... BUT THE BROAD STAYS HERE!
I SWEAR, THORNE! THIS HAPPENS EVERY TIME WE GET MUGGED TOGETHER! NO WONDER WE'RE SO CLEARLY PLATONIC!
NO TIME TO LOSE...
SUBWAY
Vent


DRINK
PHLAAAA
N'Loghthl-
APARTMENTS
NO VACANCY
ANVIL-MAN DOESN'T LIVE HERE
ANVIL-MAN COSTUME
EXCUSE ME! ARE YOU SECRETLY... ANVIL-MAN?
NO.
GREAT SCOTT!!! THAT WAS CLOSE
JUST HOW FAR AWAY FROM HERE DOES YOUR FELLA LIVE?
A WAYS.
TAP
TAP
FUNNY HOW HE'S ALWAYS FORGETTING THAT WALLET...!

RUSTLE...
BUMP...
THE UNBEATABLE
ANVIL-MAN
THWOCK
LATER, AFTER THORNE HAS BROUGHT HIS COSTUME BACK HOME...
MAVIS! *puff* *puff*! I GOT MY WALLET!
AS ALWAYS, BIFF, YOU'RE TOO LATE! ANVIL-MAN's SAVED US--- JUST LIKE HE DOES EVERY DAY!
I GUESS I SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD ON YOU, THOUGH! BECAUSE NOT EVERY MAN CAN BE LIKE ANVIL-MAN!
IT'S JUST TOO BAD YOU MISSED HIM!
OH, I DON'T KNOW, MAVIS! I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I DIDN'T MISS MUCH OF ANYTHING!! *grin*
NOW LET'S GO BACK TO THE OFFICE... AND ORDER IN!
THE END

©1992 ADAM-TROY CASTRO and CHAS GILLEN

ANDY MANGELS BACK STAGE

THE STARS OF *SHAZAM!*

On September 18, 1991, I gathered together the cast of *Shazam!* for a group interview, the first they had done since the show originally aired. As we ate a very long lunch, the camaraderie between the actors was evident even though they hadn't worked together since 1976! *Shazam!* had been an important part of their lives; the show had lasted three seasons (1974-1977) and a lot longer in memory.

Michael Gray (Billy Batson, whom I had already solo interviewed in *AH* #194) had just come off a show called *The Little People* when he got the role of Billy. Even today at 44, his still-youthful looks gain him recognition on the streets. He is currently trying to revive his career in Hollywood.

Les Tremayne (Mentor), now 78, is one of the longest working actors in Hollywood today. At 12, Les was doing vaudeville. He eventually went to radio and became one of the three best known voices in the country, along with Bing Crosby and President Roosevelt! For three years in the '30s he did 45 shows a week, giving him no anonymity if he spoke in public. Les starred in 40 films, won an award for guesting as Edward Quartermain on *General Hospital* and is now active in radio work again, as well as cartoon voice-overs.

John Davey (the series' second Captain Marvel) had joined the Marines just out of high school, but was sent out because of ulcers just prior to the Vietnam war. John went into boxing, which led to an acting career. At 52, John now paints houses and does the occasional Hollywood job. Bearded and tanned, John looks little like the clean-cut Captain Marvel of old, except for the broken nose and the twinkling eyes.

Thanks to Frank Garcia, without whom contacting any of the cast would have been impossible, and to David Galvan for his transcription work. And special thanks to the cast of *Shazam!* who were my heroes as a very young man. It was a thrill to talk to them.

LES TREMAYNE: The first time we met John, we had been waiting most of the day for Jackson Bostwick (the show's first Captain Marvel) and he never showed up. Things were getting pretty antsy because we had what, 60, 80 people on this crew? John came in, they put him in his make-up and costume, and John Davey was Captain Marvel. The next time I see him he's running like hell across the fields. He went by me once and he says, "God almighty Les, they didn't tell me I was

going to run like this...son of a bitch...they told me I was going to fly!"

Uh-oh, now they know that Mr. Mentor uses dirty words. Seriously, it was a good show for kids, though. We didn't make the cops look like damn fools...

MICHAEL GRAY: Except the day I got handcuffed to the prop truck.

TREMAYNE: Well, you were always a nasty kid anyways.

ANDY MANGELS: *You did what?*

GRAY: We had an off-duty LAPD for security who handcuffed me to the prop truck. I was too wild. To get even, I took his white police helmet and wrote "Gay Cop" on the back of his helmet. He didn't know it. He rode the freeway that night going back to the station with the helmet. He had no idea why people were honking at him and waving at him. He got back to the station, took his helmet off, and said, "I'm going to kill him."

LES DAVEY: People were throwing their phone numbers to him....

TREMAYNE: Mike is programmed so that about four o'clock every afternoon he goes berserk! He really does. The crew finally got used to it. They'd say, "Well, four o'clock, let's cut for maybe half an hour 'til Mike cools down."

GRAY: I got up at 4:30 in the morning so that I could be on the set at six and start working. By 4 P.M. it was 100 degrees heat, and I'd become wacky and giddy. I had to sit down and start drinking cold water.

MANGELS: [*to Davey*] *Did you always want to be an actor?*

DAVEY: No, as a matter of fact I was a fighter. When you're any kind of athlete in Hollywood you get Hollywood types inviting you to be an actor. So I accepted the invitation and hung up the gloves. Twenty years later I'm unemployed!

TREMAYNE: Like us all.

MANGELS: *Was* Shazam! *your first role?*

DAVEY: No, I'd done stunt work for a couple of years, then I decided that wasn't much better than boxing as far as self-preservation! So I started doing theater, acting workshops and stuff, got an agent. Then *Shazam!* came along.

I was living in Culver City at the time. The phone rang and it was my agent, Ivan Green. I'd heard of Captain Marvel but I had not heard of the show. I was a little bit reluctant. Not that I was Robert DeNiro, but it was still a little bit scary to think of doing this costume show. I said, "Ivan, let me think about it." He said, "You can't think about it. They're waiting for you on the set!"

MANGELS: *This was the day that Jackson didn't show up?*

DAVEY: That was the day! My son happened to overhear the frantic phone calls, and said "Shazam!" He was eight years old then, and he was excited about Captain Marvel! So I called back; I said, "I'll do it." His eyes lit up. My son went home and told his mother, "My dad is Captain Marvel. The real Captain Marvel got fired!"

How It's Done: Jackson Bostwick is hooked up

MANGELS: *So from there it was just zooming to the set?*

DAVEY: The whole thing was bizarre. I was an out-of-work actor taking a nap with my son. An hour later I'm streaking across town.

I had a moustache but had just shaved it for the show, so I had a tan with a white splash! They had to cover that. I get into costume, then I'm standing on a ladder with a pad underneath. The guy says, "Jump down from the ladder. What we are trying to do is create the effect of you landing from a flight." Then, within three minutes I get *these* two guys!

TREMAYNE: We came down just to look him over.

DAVEY: They haven't gotten off my case since!

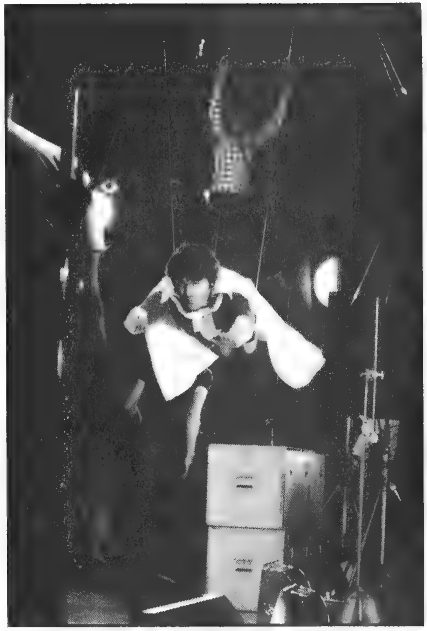
MANGELS: *What was your first impression?*

GRAY: He was a real nice guy.

TREMAYNE: It was such a contrast because he was such a willing guy, ready to work *with* you. I'm sorry to say that we didn't have that with Jackson. He was a nice guy, but you could not get *close* to him. When he started hanging on the runners on the bottom of a helicopter and going up a hundred feet and he wouldn't let them tape his hands to it...

DAVEY: They didn't have *that* problem with me at all. In fact they tried to get me to do something similar—it was a crane they were going to carry me up. They were going to have me go up like 20 feet. I said, "I was in the ring with Joe Frazier, so I've got nothing to prove! I'm not going to let them tape me onto something and dangle me out in the air and have me fall off and get paralyzed so you can have the next Captain Marvel in here the next day!

MANGELS: *Or three o'clock that afternoon!* [*all laugh*]



...and hung up in front of a screen to produce the illusion of flight.

DAVEY: So I hung onto the balloon and they lifted me about two feet. The camera guy just had to get down a little lower!

TREMAYNE: Arthur Nadell was one of the producers, and in charge of scripting. He died very recently. He died very recently. We were out on location, hot and dirty, and he said "Les, in this scene, why don't we discover you in the crotch of that tree." I went up the tree and we shot the scene, and I started to itch. When we finished the scene, and I finally got down, I was covered in these little black ants! I'm telling you, it was worse than being attacked by a rattlesnake! Oh, did they bite!

GRAY: For some reason they wanted you up there like an elf. [Mentor] kept appearing in strange places in the episode.

MANGELS: *Did you have to audition?*

TREMAYNE: They called *me*, and Mike. We didn't know what the hell we were there for. The first time I was there, you [Michael] were there. Then Jackson came in.

GRAY: I remember he was very impressed to meet you. He was a fan of yours. I hope you feel good now, after what you said about him!

TREMAYNE: He was a nice guy. He was just not in the groove somewhere. I didn't hate him the way you did. [*both laugh*]

GRAY: I found out Les was going to be on it, and it was too late. I couldn't get off.

DAVEY: Tried to renegotiate his contract?

TREMAYNE: Oh, he did, like mad. Nothing worked. Iron clad.

GRAY: That's it, morals clauses and everything.

TREMAYNE: No, we decided it was going to be so much fun we didn't want to be paid.

MANGELS: *From what I've heard, that was almost the case!*

GRAY: Yes, they accommodated that wish very well!

MANGELS: *Did you ever receive any money from merchandising?*

GRAY: It was like two percent of the net-net-net we were supposed to get in merchandising.

TREMAYNE: It was played in the Far East awhile as I remember...

GRAY: Eighty countries. They paid us up to five U.S. reruns: It was a declining rate. It was shown in Iraq.

TREMAYNE: It was?

GRAY: Seriously. I have a list.

MANGELS: *What did you get paid to do an episode?*

GRAY: Minimum was three hundred dollars an episode, wasn't it?

TREMAYNE: I guess so. We worked three days for that.

GRAY: The second year we got... double, I think. After taxes, we were taking home $400 a week to do two shows. It wore me out. I think it was $60,000-$70,000 an episode. They had budgets so low because the sponsors were paying so little for Saturday mornings.

TREMAYNE: Also at that time a lot of things were going animation, which was tough for a lot of actors. When *Shazam!* came along, it was a chance for actors to start working again, in-

John Davey, the second Captain Marvel of *Shazam!*

stead of being little voices!

I must say, they fed us beautifully. I got fat on that show.

DAVEY: They kept watching my plate because I was already fat to begin with. With the suit on, I was even more fat!

They were doing these flight sequences. They had me all cinched up, hanging on wires so that the harness was cutting in. My gut was . . . it was very funny looking. The second year, we did it with the bluescreen processing, which was a snap.

MANGELS: *Neither of you had many stunts, right?*

TREMAYNE: No, I just drove the truck, as the kids called it.

GRAY: I did too . . . one day. I tore the roof off. After lunch I was asked to drive the motor home back the location. On the way back, there was a limb I didn't see. I peeled the top back like a sardine can.

TREMAYNE: I sheared off the side lights one time.

GRAY: I had a motorcycle the first year, and they took it away from me.

The bike was supposedly hooked to the back of the motor home. During lunch I would take it and go off into the hills. Insurance wouldn't cover it, so they took it away.

TREMAYNE: Years ago, when I was 16 I was riding a Harley-Davidson and it went right through a brick wall and I went over the top of it. I never got into one of those things again until *Shazam!* They had to teach me how to start it and everything. Then the damn thing fell over and burned my leg, so they kind of weaned us away from the stunts.

We did stunts every time we did scenes in that motor home. Your eyes began to crackle from the heat coming through the windshield. When it cracked we put our foot down.

MANGELS: *It was summer filming, right?*

GRAY: Hottest part of the summer. June and July.

MANGELS: *Why didn't they put in an air conditioner?*

GRAY: They did, but it was too noisy.

MANGELS: *They didn't loop your lines?*

TREMAYNE: No, they were live. We never did any looping.

GRAY: We had a guy on the floor between the seats in the motor home to hold the mike underneath us.

MANGELS: *Was it travelling, or was it just sitting there and they'd bounce it up and down?*

GRAY: They'd bounce it up and down. A big guy, named "Big" John Carroll, 6' 9" 250 pounds. He'd take a big stick and move it.

DAVEY: Remember they put him in the [Captain Marvel] suit up in Ventura?

GRAY: He was the shark too! We did an episode in which there was a shark in the water. it was the same guy who rocked the motor home.

DAVEY: This was right about the time that *Jaws* came out, and I'd been deathly afraid of sharks. One of the directors says, "We can't use John on these; we have to see your face." I said, "I'm not going in the water!"

There were great white sightings out there out there, big ones. I wasn't going in that water with these yum-yum boots on. They'd tested colors on sharks, and the naval pilots jokingly called these yellow life vests "yum-yum yellow." It was the same color as these damn boots! Nobody realized how scared I was! These monsters down there, and here I am, bobbing around like a red fish lure.

MANGELS: Shazam! *was responsible for a forest fire, wasn't it?*

GRAY: We were filming an episode in which Wink Shapiro was supposed to shoot a gas flare to call for help, but he wasn't really supposed to shoot the flare. He loaded the flare gun and shot it. The flare went up, the wind caught it, and it blew on the hill and caused a forest fire. The government forestry department sent out a crew of prisoners to work, and the sent the bill to Filmation Studios! Thousands of dollars, helicopters, fire engines and road guys to put out the fire.

We had a fire marshal on the set every day after that.

I remember that Wink grabbed a shovel, and ran up the hill to put the fire out. The hill was really steep, and he got about 45 feet up and realized he couldn't do it. He stopped, and the shovel went down straight into the ground with the handle sticking up. Wink started going down with his legs spread, and he got the shovel right between his legs! It was terrible. [*Michael leaves for a previous appointment.*]

MANGELS: *John, when they were hanging you off wires, was that in front of a background or did they do it on location?*

DAVEY: No, it was in a studio, on a sound stage. They would leave me hanging there between shots while they set up the next shot. I was this big whale laying out there with these little wires, this little belt, this harness they put on me. Every once in a while I would have to say, "Time out! Let me out, let me down!" I couldn't wait until they got Joanna Cameron on, because they were going to put her on wires after they got through with me.

TREMAYNE: Isis?

DAVEY: Yeah, Isis. But because she was so light and agile, it was a breeze for her.

MANGELS: *What was working with Joanna like?*

DAVEY: She was fine. I never got to know her real well. She was a little distant, wasn't she?

TREMAYNE: Yeah. We never got to know her.

DAVEY: One time I had to give her a ride home and it was the first time we really got to talk to each other as two people. It was a quiet drive, 30 or 40 miles. She was in a beauty contest up in the Northwest somewhere, and then she was put on a contract with Universal. She got very gun-shy of the whole Hollywood scene. Everybody was trying to get in her pants. She was real sweet and warm. I was surprised, because she was very aloof for the show.

TREMAYNE: Well, she had to have her guard up. You can understand it with these pretty girls. Everybody tries to take advantage of them.

MANGELS: *How did the public react when you were doing the show?*

TREMAYNE: On location I learned that all kids are sticky. They would bring us tin can labels for autographs, or sandwich wrappings or toilet paper—anything they could find that we could write our name on. And they were always touching you, they were always sticky. I guess kids always are.

DAVEY: I did several personal appearances at auto shows and things like that as Captain Marvel. I was very nervous for the first few shows, but gradually I had gotten to know how to handle myself around the kids. I didn't have an act. The kids would just line up, I'd sign pictures and shake their hands. I'd ask their names and talk to them, just like Santa Claus would do at a shopping mall.

I was up on the stage this one time. There was a little girl about ten, and her brother, who was maybe six. He was kind of lurking back there and looking at me funny. I'd gotten to know by then that a lot of kids want to meet Captain Marvel, but they're shy. So I said, "Would you like a picture?", and the little girl said, "He don't want no picture. He don't want to meet you." I asked her what was wrong, and she said, "He thinks you're nuts!" [*all laugh*]

TREMAYNE: I had a very poignant thing happen to me that I will never forget. I was sitting at this table with my wife Joanie, signing pictures to all those kids who are lined up. And all of a sudden I looked up, and there's this little black boy with the Afro haircut and the biggest black eyes you ever saw in your life, and this innocent face. He's looking at me sort of like the boy you mentioned. He just wasn't sure if I was Mr. Mentor or not because I didn't have the bush jacket on. Well, I got him the picture made out, and then his tears welled up in his eyes, and he couldn't stand it anymore. I was Mr. Mentor no matter what I was dressed in. He came over and grabbed me around the hips, and just hugged me for all it was worth. It broke me up.

Kids love to have heroes, and we were heroes to them. It was an unusual show in that respect. Kids don't have heroes anymore.

MANGELS: *What's your thoughts on it?*

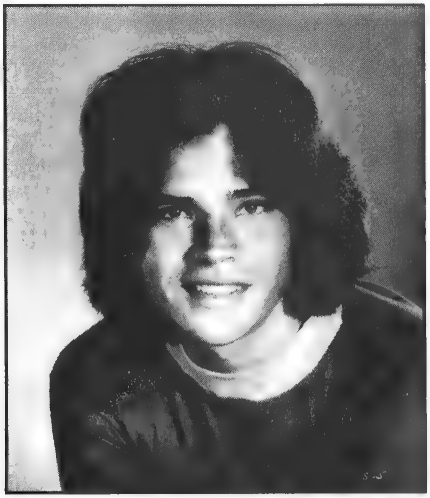
DAVEY: I couldn't say it anymore eloquently than Les did . . .

TREMAYNE: Of course not!

DAVEY: As I said earlier, when I was first offered the opportunity, I didn't really want to do it. I was thinking how I was ever going to outlive this

Les Tremayne in action.

Michael Gray as Billy Batson.



role. But my career hasn't suffered. Personally, I was very proud having been a part of that, especially with what's on television now. We had a moral lesson every week without preaching. I was very proud of it.

To those kids, you're Captain Marvel. We were shooting up at Thousand Oaks one time, and this kid says, "Captain Marvel, Jimmy keeps hitting me with a stick!" I said, "You tell Jimmy to quit hitting you with a stick, and you tell him Captain Marvel said so!" A few minutes went by and he came beside me. I could see that he didn't feel like talking. I said, "Hey, did you tell him?" He said, "Yeah, I told him. He said to tell you to sit on it!"" [*all laugh*]

TREMAYNE: We were so busy. Even so, it was a fun experience.

MANGELS: *Did you have any strange adult fans, or groupies?*

DAVEY: I did this one personal appearance with Mike. It was a screw-up because Mike and I were on the stage at the same time. Of course, Mike was having a great time, making the people who came to see us have a great time, but really pissing the promoters off. We were trying to make light of the fact that the little kids were confused because both Billy and Captain Marvel were there at the same time.

There were a lot of teeny-bopper cuties that were really interested in Mike's autograph. I was just counting them as they went by. Finally, I just said that they couldn't have Billy Batson's autograph until they got Captain Marvel's!

MANGELS: *Did people ever rib you about being the wrong Captain Marvel?*

DAVEY: I ran into awkward situations where I'd make an appearance on a Saturday afternoon, and that morning they had a *Shazam!* on with Jackson. Little kids would say, "You're not Captain Marvel! What the hell kind of deal is this?" [*laughs*]

TREMAYNE: They took it very seriously.

DAVEY: The parents especially! I'd try to explain it to them. Some of them would buy it, but but some of them would complain and wonder what kind of exploitation was going to happen next.

TREMAYNE: I never had any more fun in my life than I had with these two guys. We didn't have much time to fraternize, but when there was a move to another location we'd get in the van and move out . . .We had to go to the location every day. As I recall, we drove our own cars.

MANGELS: *Three hundred dollars a show and they made you drive your own cars?*

DAVEY: They had to reimburse us for mileage and stuff, but it wasn't much.

TREMAYNE: Right at the end I had gotten 60 bucks travel money for a couple of weeks. I left it in bills, in my costume. All of a sudden this wardrobe guy goes by and waves goodbye to us all. He's going like hell down this dirt road. I went back—my boots were gone, my travel money was gone. I never had a pair of boots fit so well.

DAVEY: Did they ever tell you about the time they buried my car?

TREMAYNE: I feel terrible about that. It was a brand new, bright little sports car with the most beautiful finish on it. The crew just started to get us loaded on the last day. They wanted to see how wild we'd get. Mike and I put a lot of dirt on the hood.

DAVEY: I came out of the dressing room, and there's this beautiful little car with boulders on it, and sage brush and cactus sticking out of it. When I got closer I could see there hadn't been any damage. It was done very carefully.

TREMAYNE: You can see by the size of him why Mike and I were called the bravest people in the world! John took it very nicely.

There was one day that I needed Captain Marvel. I went to the post office one day, and five black teenagers are coming around the corner with epithets and filthy profanity. A girl stepped on my foot and knocked me off balance, and I grabbed her to save myself from falling down. She screamed, "He hit me!" Her boyfriend turned on me and started punching me right in the face. The other kids got into the act. Then all of a sudden, the sheriff's car shows up, and this black cop gets out and he's on my case. I said [to his partner], "Look, I'm on every week with a kid's show. He said, "You don't have to tell me. I watch you every Saturday morning with my two sons!" I said, "Then would you let me get out of here?" And he did. To this day my nose has got this big thing here.

DAVEY: There was a larger audience of adults than we'd think. One time I was getting off a plane and this stewardess said, "You're Captain Marvel, aren't you?" I said, "Yeah, do you watch the show?" She said, "Well, I don't watch it, but the Captain mentioned it."

MANGELS: *Do people recognize you on the street now?*

DAVEY: Very seldom. I'm sure Les is all the time. Les has been in so many things.

TREMAYNE: I'm recognized often, but I've done some 60 years of broadcasting. I've done about 40 pictures, but people usually recognize me for my voice.

MANGELS: *So what are you doing now?*

TREMAYNE: I'm about retired. I'm one of the founding members of the California Radio Theatre. We have some very fine people, all of whom have been in radio for years and years. We do a radio show, usually a classic, about once a month.

I have a commercial agent, but I don't usually bother with it anymore. It's too much of a hassle. Why should I have to go in and read for some punk 20 years old who has no idea of the history of the business?

MANGELS: *You say you do cartoon voices?*

TREMAYNE: I worked for Hanna-Barbera and Chuck Jones.

MANGELS: *What have you done that people might recognize?*

TREMAYNE: I was Harry the singing cat on the *Cricket in Times Square* and other movies. I just finished *Pirates of Dark Water.*

DAVEY: I could have a John Davey film festival in about three minutes. [*laughs*]

MANGELS: *Where did you go after* Shazam!*?*

DAVEY: Just episodic television, mostly. A lot of commercials. I did six *Rockford Files* and four *Barnaby Jones*. I moved to Long Beach, so I put myself geographically undesirable, as far as the industry is concerned.

MANGELS: *Do the two of you feel that* Shazam! *typecast you or hurt you at all?*

DAVEY: Oh no, not at all.

MANGELS: *I know Michael does.*

TREMAYNE: It's possible with Mike because he's short for show business. If you're not 7-foot three, you don't work.

DAVEY: Right, or DeNiro. Otherwise, you generally wind up doing fairly decent supporting parts sometimes, but nothing serious. I've never had the opportunity to do any prime time series as a lead.

TREMAYNE: And it's a shame, I think, because John is good on camera. It's a surprise to me that neither of them did as much as they should have.

DAVEY: Well, they had their chance, 'cause I'm getting out. My house is up for sale and I'm heading north!

MANGELS: *What are you doing now?*

DAVEY: Well, I'm painting houses a lot. I used to paint houses when things were slow just to kind of keep myself from going crazy. I did it as an avocation, I guess. Now it's my vocation!

TREMAYNE: It also keeps you from going on drugs, or becoming an alcoholic or something like that. The trouble with a lot of these kids is that they get one show and they believe their publicity. The next thing you know they're off the air, and they can't stand the thought of working for a living.

DAVEY: I have actors call me up, buddies of mine that are in the same stage I'm in—a mostly not-working actor. [*laughs*] They'll say, "Hey I'm losing my car man, and my wife's pregnant. I say, "Hey, pal, I got room on my ladder for you any time, and I'll pay you ten bucks an hour!" I have not had *one* actor take me up on that offer.

As far as my own experience in this business, I have no complaints at all, though I never quite reached my ultimate goal. I've had a lot of fun, and I've met some great people. Because of guys like Les Tremayne that have made the unions, made the conditions in this business really great in terms of residuals and health benefits, when I'm 55 I can get retirement money, and I've got health benefits.

TREMAYNE: It was a tough fight!

DAVEY: How many people can say they came in to this town and for 20 years they made a living?

TREMAYNE: I feel the same way. Over 60 years in the Golden Age of broadcasting was the greatest life anyone could possibly have. And I defy you to find a guy or gal who was in that period who doesn't say the same thing. It was the most delightful, delicious, exciting time. My whole life has been that. Who could ask for more?

MANGELS: *Final thoughts from each of you on* Shazam!*?*

TREMAYNE: I had a wonderful time on it. I enjoyed the producers, Norm and Lou and Nadell. I loved the crew. No matter where we went they made it as pleasant for us as they could. And as I said before, the producers fed us beautifully! We both got fat on that show.

DAVEY: What can I say after that? It's funny. When I started *Shazam!* I thought, "This is something I'm going to have to overcome." It turns out there wasn't anything to overcome. It's something I can point to with extreme pride today.

Last night, seeing Roseanne taking her daugher to get birth control pills, I'm thinking, "Geez, I'm glad I was Captain Marvel!" So despite wherever television and society at large are going, *Shazam!* was great and I was thrilled to be associated with it. ●

A FEW WORDS with ANGELA BOCAGE

Interview by Jeff Lang

JEFF LANG: *Hi, Angela, how are you?*

ANGELA BOCAGE: Fine. I was just reading this great porn review in *Diseased Pariah News*.

LANG: *Tell me about it.*

BOCAGE: It's a very positive review of a movie called *Jackaroos*, subtitled *A Hard Day in the Saddle Leaves Hard Dick in the Pants*—gay porn with an Australian setting, although the reviewer does comment that the characters "come home with their hair perfectly moussed and their bodies freshly shaven after two months in the outback . . ."

LANG: *What was the name of that magazine?*

BOCAGE: Oh, you have to know about this magazine—one of my best friends is the editor—*Diseased Pariah News*.

LANG: [*laughs*] *I've never heard of that.*

BOCAGE: It was written up in *Time*. It's actually nationally known, though hated and feared by some people! One time they had Jesse Helms in a bottle of piss on the cover. It's by and for HIV-positive people and it's got helpful info, wild comix, and the best attitude. Let me give the address in case anybody wants to send for it—it has a way of cutting through the bullshit: *DPN*, P.O. Box 30564, Oakland, CA 94604. It has a sense of humor I really relate to.

LANG: *And you do have a weird sense of humor.*

BOCAGE: I guess you must have read that stuff I sent you . . .

LANG: *Well, I only actually got the stuff a couple of hours ago, so I've been frantically reading it all so we could do this when we said we would.*

BOCAGE: [*laughs*] Don't operate any heavy machinery!

LANG: *No, I won't! But, before we begin to talk about your cartooning, let's talk about* Real Girl *because I think that's the title most* AH *readers will find most accessible. How did* Real Girl *come about?*

BOCAGE: When the title occured to me I had to do the magazine! The stated purpose of *Real Girl* of course, is to be "the Sex Comik for all genders and orientations by cartoonists who are good in bed," and so there's a certain level of drag queen influence, all kinds of queer influence—though no resistance to straight material either if it's good—and the term "Real Girl" refers to a non-drag queen, a biological female. I learned this by sneaking peeks at my stepmother's copy of *Everything You Wanted to Know about Sex But Were Afraid to Ask* when I was 11. It's a multilevel joke, of course. They're all kinds of men in the book too!

Also, part of the impetus was the problems with *Wimmen's Comix* [*Now called* Wimmin's Comics—*TH*]. *Wimmen's* is a worthwhile project in giving new people a place to be published, but I think it tries to be too many things at once, tries to publish every possible female, both beginner and established cartoonist, every issue, and ends up with no breathing room and no personality. Jay Kinney was here the other night talking about my piece for the next *Young Lust*—and trying to help me learn how to use a brush—and he agrees that I need to work a lot on pacing because my stuff for *Wimmen's* has been so cramped, my worst work, really.

I just thought with *Real Girl* I could do more with gender-related themes and also give the artists a more thoughtful presentation, better production values, a better showcase for intelligent work. And of course I wanted men in the book too—guys like Mario Hernandez, Eddie Campbell, Peter Kuper, Colin Upton, Terry Laban, and Garrit Gaston are some of my favorite cartoonists. In a way they inherit from Aline Kominsky a tradition of realistic portrayal of life and sex.

LANG: *What do you mean?*

BOCAGE: I guess that the best male cartoonists do something women have always done with the use of telling details, the not-always-flattering autobiographical stories. Look at Mario and Colin's wonderful pieces in *Real Girl #3*!

LANG: *Each issue of* Real Girl *has a different theme.*

BOCAGE: Yes, and I don't know if that's a good idea or if it's always going to be the case. In the first issue, the theme basically emerged from the art: breaking the rules. In #3, based

From "Major Fun—Unrepentant Confessions of a Baton Twirler."

DALLAS. 8TH GRADE. A GIRL WITH GLASSES & SHIRTTAILS OUT, I DAYDREAMED ABOUT WHICH GIRLS WOULD I BE BEST FRIENDS WITH, AND WORRIED ABOUT SILENT STRIPING, AND WHY SUCH GOOD ARTISTS ENDED UP DRAWING FASHION ADS FOR NEWMAN'S OR TITCHE'S. REBELLION WAS SQUASHED BY PEER GROUP COOPTATION. 8TH GRADE WAS THE GRADE WHERE YOU HAD TO GET IN LINE FOR THE GOODIES. LIKE THE FUTURE DYSENGRID ON IT, AT LEAST THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. THEY MADE IT THE TRYOUTS YEAR.
ANGELA, GET HERE!!
FOR CHEERLEADERS, DRILL TEAM, PEP CLUB OFFICERS, MARCHING BAND HONORS SOCIETIES, & WHO KNEW WHAT ELSE? NOT ME. BUT I HAD TWO BEST FRIENDS NAMED SHARON, & THE ONE WHO PLAYED CLARINET IN BAND WITH ME SAID I OUGHT TO TRAIN WITH HER FOR SPRING'S MAJORETTE TRYOUTS
OH!
O.K.
WE PRACTICED, MADE UP TRYOUT ROUTINES (MINE WAS TO "AGE OF AQUARIUS") AND WERE PROUD TO BE TRYING OUT FOR THE MOST SKILLED (YOU EVEN HAD TO BE A GOOD ENOUGH MUSICIAN TO MARCH: MARCHING BAND!) AND PERHAPS MOST ATHLETIC-

NICE GIRLS DON'T TALK ABOUT...
Sex, Religion, & Politics
©1990 Angela Bocage
WE LOVE YOU!
YOU'RE HERE, SUSAN!
THANK YOU...
YOU'LL BE SORRY!
I'LL MAKE YOU STERILE!
STAND BACK, PLEASE.
BABY KILLER!!
SEEN SOME THIS?
GEE! STOP A SECOND!
SHE'D MADE HER DECISION; SHE DIDN'T WANT TO READ YOUR LEAFLETS OR TALK TO YOU...
WHY KEEP SCREAMIN' AT HER?
THE LORD HAS POWER EVEN NOW TO REACH INTO HER HARDENED HEART!
IF THEY KNOW YOUR SO-CALLED "SAFE, LEGAL" ABORTIONS LED TO STERILITY, OR, FREQUENTLY, DEATH, NOT TO MENTION INSANITY!!"
"THAT EVEN IF THEY DON'T COMMIT SUICIDE, THEY'LL PROBABLY NEED PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION, POSSIBLY FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES -WOULD THEY GO IN?"
IF THEY KNEW A TWO-WEEK OLD FETUS CAN DO SIMPLE ARITHMETIC?!!
YOU FORGOT THE ONE ABOUT BE-COMING LES-BIAN & GOING TO HELL.
STILL--WHY HARASS A LOW-COST OAKLAND CLINIC? NOT AN ORINDA GYNECOLOGIST?
BECAUSE--THESE WOMEN ARE FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHT!
(THE NERVE!)

Operation Rescue Funnies from Bocage's self-syndicated strip.

An *AH*-publishable panel from "The Lactation Contest."

LOOK, CARYN, THERE IT IS! THE BAKE EVERY YEAR.
AND THAT'S A BOOBY-PRIZE!
-ANGELA, I JUST SAW SOMEONE WITH LONG, TWISTED EARS AND A SNOUT TAKE A PICTURE OF US.
CONVENTION CENT
OH, IT'S BECAUSE THEY THINK THE PEOPLE FROM SAN FRANCISCO LOOK FUNNY IN ALL OUR BLACK LEATHER!
THE ANNUAL CONVENTION WAS JUST ABOUT THE ONLY TIME I SAW SO MANY SWEDISH-KITE ENEMAS IN ONE PLACE.
A WOMAN WHO'D JUST GIVEN BIRTH TO TWINS JUST HAD A BABY AND WAS FEEDING HIM AS GOODness INTENDED...
BUT HE'D STAYED HOME WITH HIS DAD AND GRANDMOTHER. WOULD REALIZING DR. DESTINY THERE WAS CARTOONIFY A CURE, YET?

"AS WE GOT OLDER WE'D BE SUCH A HELP EVEN BEFORE HE COULD TALK."
Pitter-patter-pat!
TOO MATCH'N HUNT YOU'RE RIGHT OFF TO GOODWILL! THANKS, JOEY!
"AND LATER, SO MUCH FUN TO SHOP WITH!"
WELL-O... IT IS A GREAT JACKET!
IT SURE IS! YOU CAN BORROW IT, 'K
DEAL!
HM. NOW, HOW WI... I MAKE THE DI-O-DE LAMP FOR HIS ELE. VENTH BIRTHDAY?
"WE'D DO MOTHER-SON ACTIVITIES."
WOW. JUST IN TIME! THERE'S JONNY AND HIS MOM TO PICK US UP FOR THE MARCH!
GAY & PROUD
PROUD MOTHER
"I'D NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MY SON BEING AWFUL TO MY FRIENDS' DAUGHTERS OR GETTING THEM PREGNANT OR ANYTHING."
MA, THIS IS RAE. GO-WE'RE GONNA BE STUDYING IN MY ROOM!
OKAY HON. I SHOULD BE BACK LATE. THANKS AGAIN FOR THE LOAN OF THE JACKET!
THAT OLD THING?!

Bocage fantasizes about her gay son in "Lavender Booties."

on the stories I had people saying they wanted to do, the theme of commitment emerged. Now with #4, the theme that the times seem to demand is the body as a political battleground. The next few issues the themes are, let's see: sluts, which has only one rule—no sluts die at the end; lesbians; gender-fuck; and therapy. The therapy issue may be the funniest because Roxxie of the feminist humor 'zine *Girljock* may be guest co-editor.

(Pause while Angela talks to her two toddlers. Jasmine, age one, climbs into her lap and Angela asks Jeff if he'd mind if she nurses while they continue their conversation.)

LANG: *Mind? No, go ahead. That leads me to ask you about one of the stories you sent, "The Lactation Contest" from* Weird Smut *#4. That was really raunchy and a lot of fun.*

BOCAGE: Thank you! It was a lot of fun to do. . . .

LANG: *What convention were you referring to here?*

BOCAGE: The San Diego con back in 1989. I felt like I was educating people about female anatomy, don't you think? You know, like why that woman behind the counter might snap at you in a bitchy way. . . .

LANG: *Tell me about, "(Nice Girls Don't Talk About . . .) Sex, Religion, and Politics."*

BOCAGE: That's my self-syndicated strip. It appears regularly in one quarterly, one weekly, one monthly, one fortnightly, and sporadically elsewhere. The truth is I just don't have time to send it places, but it gets a very good response when I do! The title is another one that came to me out of the blue making perfect sense because sex, religion and politics are really at the crux of a lot of important issues today.

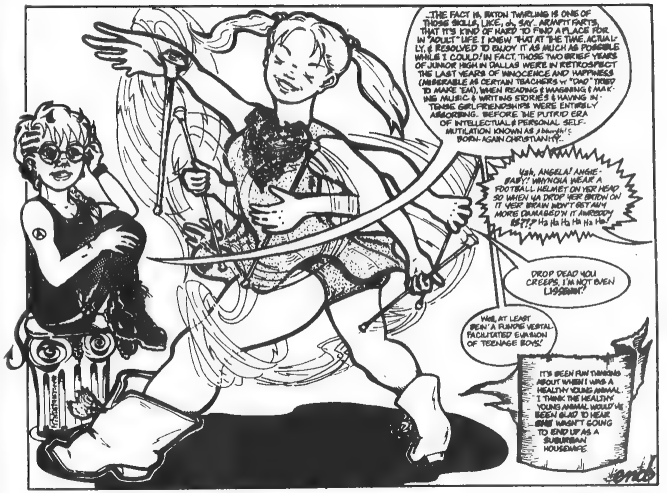
Reproductive freedom is in terrible jeopardy in this country, and as a mother, I know what kind of energy and commitment parenting takes. I can't believe that people think that children are well-served by prohibiting abortion when you have to be *more* than 100% there to be a good mother. To force women who are too sick, too poor, or in *any* way not ready to have children, insults and injures both the children and the women because most women simply won't do that—every three minutes, a women dies from an unsafe, unsterile back alley abortion in the world today. No person who understood women and children could want that to increase.

Another issue that I take up in "Sex, Religion & Politics" is AIDS. Again, I am blown away by the amount of mythology and cruelly misleading information people try to put out about AIDS. My best male buddies are the aforementioned *DPN* editor and his boyfriend; an *AIDS* journalist (he's my daughter's father); and a sex counselor—it's funny to me with my ladylike Southern upbringing that when I go out with my friends, we're sitting in some cafe talking about genital lesions and tubercular phlegm—and I get the best perspectives and newest scoops every day, so I try counter the Buchanan-Duke-Helms-Bush BS and still have a fun comic.

I can't believe in the old taboo against political art. It was a carefully engineered, Cold War taboo to keep

"Why We Do It," about cutting, from *Street Music* #5. Script by Mark Burbey.

I SAW THE FULL JULY MOON OVER THE SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS...
...FROM THE INSIDE OF A WHITE VAN IN 1977.
AFTER THEY TOOK AWAY MY MAT KNIFE IN MOUNTAIN VIEW THEY WERE SENDING ME FOR OBSERVATION
HEY- I NEED IT FOR MY WORK!
BY THE TIME I GOT THERE I'D DECIDED TO ACT SO NORMAL THEY'D SHAKE THEIR HEADS AND SEND ME HOME
THANKS FOR THE GRAPE JUICE. I'M FINE NOW.
WELL, IT'S GOOD YOU GOT OUT OF THAT BUT YOU KNOW CUTTING ISN'T GOOD-
IT'S SOMETHING MOSTLY WOMEN DO TO THEMSELVES-
(W SHRINK-TEN YEARS AGO, WHO OFTEN TALKED POLITICS)
IT'S OBVIOUS, WON'T IT?
HM. WELL, AREN'T YOU JUST PERPETUATING WOMEN'S OPPRESSION?
THIS IS NICE TEA
A LOT OF WOMEN HURT THEMSELVES STARTING OUT MAYBE JUST SCRATCHING WITH A PIN, MOVING ON TO CUTTING-
SPLAT. SPLAT.
I'M SERIOUS- YOUR FRIENDS ARE CONCERNED!
DID THEY MENTION THAT DRINKING HELPS? JUST DISCOVERED IT!
MY FRIENDS?


...THE FACT IS, BATON TWIRLING IS ONE OF THOSE SKILLS, LIKE, UH, SAY, ARCHERY THAT'S KIND OF HARD TO FIND A PLACE FOR IN "ADULT" LIFE. I KNEW THAT AT THE TIME, ACTUALLY, I RESOLVED TO ENJOY IT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WHILE I COULD IN FACT, THOSE TWO BRIEF YEARS OF JUNIOR HIGH IN DALLAS WERE IN RETROSPECT THE LAST YEARS OF INNOCENCE AND HAPPINESS (MISERABLE AS CERTAIN TEACHERS W "TOM" TRIED TO MAKE 'EM), WHEN READING & IMAGINING & MAKING MUSIC & WRITING STORIES & HAVING IN-TENSE GIRLFRIENDSHIPS WERE ENTIRELY ABSORBING. BEFORE THE PUTRID ERA OF INTELLECTUAL & PERSONAL SELF-MUTILATION KNOWN AS "BEING BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN!!!"
Yeh, ANGELA! ANGIE-BABY! WHY'NCHA WEAR A FOOTBALL HELMET ON YER HEAD SO WHEN YA DROP YER BATON ON IT YER BRAIN WON'T GET ANY MORE DAMAGED'N IT ALREADY IS?!? Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha
DROP DEAD YOU CREEPS, I'M NOT EVEN LISTENIN'!
WELL AT LEAST BEIN' A PLAYBOY VESTAL FACILITATED EVASION OF TEENAGE BOYS.'
IT'S BEEN FUN THINKING ABOUT WHEN I WAS A HEALTHY YOUNG ANIMAL. I THINK THE HEALTHY YOUNG ANIMAL WOULD'VE BEEN GLAD TO HEAR SHE WASN'T GOING TO END UP AS A SUBURBAN HOUSEWIFE.

Angela Bocage then and now. From "Major Fun."

us from saying things we care about, from saying things that challenged the entrenched powers-that-be. But I'm not just a bulletin board! My challenge is to find the moment or the image at the crux of things. I was happy with the image I sent you of Bush as an irresponsible, spoiled child smashing his toy trucks; I like going over the limits and being really nasty, like showing Barbara Bush, who's probably a nice lady, in some cartoon as a screechy dominatrix. I sure wish she'd shake George by the scruff of the neck.

LANG: *I think a lot of people would like to shake him by the neck. I liked the "Sex, Religion, and Politics" in* Processed World *#28, about the women outside the abortion clinic. You said all the quotes were things you've heard people say?*

BOCAGE: All the contempt (on the part of the Operation "Rescue" people) towards the clinic clients, the gay people, and the people of color, yes absolutely! But no one actually claimed that a fetus can do math!

LANG: *How long have you been doing "Sex, Religion, and Politics?"*

BOCAGE: Since late 1990. My aforementioned *DPN* editor pal, Michael Botkin, invited me to illustrate his column in the *Bay Area Reporter* (San Francisco's gay weekly newspaper), and it's grown from there.

LANG: *There was a reference in a two-pager called "Major Fun" where you were talking about being a majorette, then, later, becoming a born-again Christian.*

BOCAGE: Yes, in my early teens, shortly after the death of my mother, I was gang-saved by well-meaning Texas Baptists! So fundamentalism is another thing I'm a survivor of! I understand how it works, how it uses fear, how it can devour a person's life. That kind of religion, which really operates so much from ignorance, is becoming an important political force, and as long as I have the freedom to, I'm going to skewer it.

LANG: *Well, we've talked about politics a little bit and religion a little bit, so now let's talk about sex. You're really Frank about it.*

BOCAGE: Yeah, I'm comfortable with frankness and comfortable with sex! I guess I must have some problems with it, because I think anyone who watches TV as a child is inundated by these horrible lies and this simpering coyness about sexuality. The woman who midwifed me with Jasmine has a button I love—she used to wear it to confrontations with Operation Rescue—that just says, "They're Lying!" There are so many lies about sex. . . .

LANG: *What are the big ones? Or the small ones, if they're the ones that come to mind.*

BOCAGE: One of the biggest is that men and women are totally diferent. Men one extreme, women the other. In fact, we're far more similar than we are different, and most people aren't at either end of the gender continuum but some fascinating point along the way. Another lie is that people don't need sex—it's just a frivolous distraction peripheral to our real existence, working hard for our bosses. It's trivialized, which I think happens as well as with AIDS; people don't respect sexuality, so you hear, "Oh, AIDS is spread through sex, so the self-indulgent pigs should just quit it right now!" What about all those diseases spread by breathing or eating?! We dishonor sex in this culture.

I've always wanted to form my own opinions about it, to the point of quitting TV when I was about 10 because I could see there was something really fucked up going on in the way it was telling me what I could and couldn't be as a woman. I came to see sex, and being sexually active, as a mode of learning, but also as a form of play.

LANG: *I think that's a great attitude, but, unfortunately, I don't think most people feel that way. I know most people don't feel that way.*

BOCAGE: Being in love is an important mode of learning and playing too, but it's been extremely rare for me. . . . ●

REviews

HARD BOILED #1-3

Written by FRANK MILLER; illustrated by GEOF DARROW; colored by CLAUDE LEGRIS; edited by RANDY STRADLEY. Published by DARK HORSE COMICS

My one-word reaction to *Hard Boiled* #3: "Smashing!"

Or should that be "Striking!"?

How about "Electrifying!"?

Well, one thing's for certain—the cover is certainly "Brain-blasting!"

While we're all recovering from that little bout of hilarity, let me point out that *Hard Boiled* is relentlessly, often delightfully, experimental. Certainly Frank Miller was feeling his oats when he wrote this one—after rehashing many of his familiar themes in the tepid *Give Me Liberty*, the comics industry's numero uno megastar has taken a fresh approach with this series. Mr. Miller has chosen spin a vignette rather than tell a story (or are you satisfied you know all you need to know to fully appreciate Unit Four, Willeford Home Appliance, and its mysterious, unnamed competitors?) and though he creates simplistic, cardboard characters, he makes us care about them by giving them only a smattering of well-chosen dialogue. How else does one explain the sympathy one feels for Nixon, the crimson-faced robot who doesn't take kindly to finding out that he's not just your average man in the street?

It could be argued that Mr. Miller's work on *Hard Boiled* is all sizzle and no bite, but at least it's a highly individual sizzle. These days, when the role of the scripter is being devalued and far too many "writers" are doing by-the-numbers hackwork, it's a pleasure to see a comic that helps reminds readers that this medium at its finest is a marriage of interesting pictures and finely crafted words.

Speaking of "interesting pictures," how about Geof Darrow, eh? All those big panels! All that painstaking detail! All those wry, humorous little touches —my favorites from #3 include the "Vanilla Dice Clay" subway sign and Barney Rubble on the cover of *TV Guide*! Colorist Claude Legris and his vibrant palette (My God! the *colors* . . .) ride shotgun for Mr. Darrow's superlative renderings and hyperactive imagination. Beware. They pack a potent visual one-two punch.

A final observation before I exit, stage right: Is it just me, or does *Hard Boiled* bear an amazing resemblance to MTV? Neither of them is good for you, but both are so vibrant, so in-your-face sassy and clever they're practically mesmerizing. Consider this a vote for glitz, then . . .

Hardboiled: Not good for you, but mesmerizing nonetheless.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ***—Bruce Canwell***

STUPID COMICS

By PETER BAGGE; edited by KIM THOMPSON. Published by FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, INC.

Stupid Comics is a collection of short pieces from Bagge's *Neat Stuff*, the magazine-sized predecessor to the comic book sized *Hate*, and other places. I was 24 when *Neat Stuff* came out and I thought it was really dumb, really adolescent. Now I'm 31 and I think all this stuff is a scream. What's happened to me? God help me, does this mean I might start thinking *National Lampoon* and *Married . . . With Children* are funny? Or could it be that I've lived long enough to agree with Hobbes (Thomas, not the stuffed tiger) that life can be nasty, brutish, and short, and have, therefore embraced these nasty, brutish, and short cartoon characters? Nah. I think I've just loosened up a little.

Most of these strips are about Girly-Girl and her little pals Chucky-Boy and the Goon on the Moon. G-G is sort of like Ernie Bushmiller's Nancy on mescaline, *Peanuts*' Lucy with bad PMS, or Little Lulu with an endless supply of hand grenades. Chuckie-Boy is Every-Patsy and the Goon on the Moon is a disgusting little pervert. Few of these strips are *about* anything. As often as not, they're excuses for Girly-Girl to have a tantrum and beat the crap out of Chuckie-Boy. It's a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing but sound and fury. They're exercises in excess, Bagge blowing off steam.

Other highlights are: "Generic Comics," four pages of cookie-cutter humor prefaced with the instructions, "Chuckle Heartily at the Conclusion of Each Comic Strip;" "The Vomit Glossary" (Technicolor Yawn, Driving the Porcelain Bus); "Reader Participation Pages," and, hold on to your hats *Hate* fans, the first ever appearance of Buddy Bradley's pal Stinky. Well, it was a thrill-and-a-half for me.

All of Bagge's work is funny and dangerous, though he's become more dangerous lately (as seen in *Hate*), because his characters are much more carefully constructed. We used to be safe because Bagge used to demarcate easily distinguishable Us and Them camps. These days, the satire cuts closer to the bone because we readers have to recognize something of ourselves in Bagge's targets. I guess he had to get all this stupid stuff out of his system before he could get down to cases. Treasure it always.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ***—Jeff Lang***

JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA #1

Written by LEN STRAZEWSKI; penciled by MIKE PAROBECK; inked by MIKE MACHLAN; edited by BRIAN AUGUSTYN. Published by DC

It's hard to go back again.

The Justice Society heroes, who were formerly banished to an uncertain limbo (in the most thoroughly lambasted of all post-*Crisis* continuity fixes), are back in the DC universe.

First of all, the experience has actually left them younger, and though most were coming to accept retirement in the light of advancing age and changing times, a few of them, starting with the original Green Lantern and Flash, have decided to show the rookies how it's done.

These are the heroes of DC's Golden Age, but they're really a throwback to the Silver Age, when these slightly aged heroes would pop over from Earth Two and help their younger counterparts save the universe. Frankly, I've always been a little disappointed that DC made the gutsy move of introducing aging super-heroes and then never bothered to age them any further. It's difficult to sympathize with the 75 year-old Green Lantern's complaints about getting older when he has a 45 year-old body. I know that the rejuvenation thing fixes the continuity problem, but it still feels like a dramatic cheat.

The book also makes a blatant attempt to revive the Silver Age standards of heroes *and* storytelling. Parobeck and Machlan's art has the kind of smooth, clear draftmanship that's gone out of vogue at Marvel, and Strazewski's script is heavy with subplots (this *is* the '90s after all), but still works under the assumption that the good guys are essentially good. As for the heroics, the first issue climaxes with GL and the Flash easily taking out a bunch of loud-mouthed, violent mutants. Symbolic, huh?

The question remains as to whether this will pull in any readers. Like the ailing Impact. titles, *JSA*'s artistic approach is very reactionary, perhaps admirably so, but comics fans are generally more concerned with action and trends than aesthetics. Besides this, it's a comic about older heroes when teenagers have almost taken over the genre.

But I like to think that any well done comic has a chance of succeeding, and *JSA* is definitely well done. Though its stated theme is that the Good Old Days are gone, it's creative team seems determined to bring them back.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ***—Thomas Harrington***

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA #61

Written & penciled by DAN JURGENS; inked by RICK BURCHETT; edited by BRIAN AGUSTYN. Published by DC COMICS

The League is starting over again. Again.

The old new League, with its moldy shtick and lack of strong storylines, really did need an overhaul as far as I was concerned. The joke was getting real old fast. The thinking behind this new incarnation of the League is to combine the old '60s adventure with a touch of the new "humor." Overall, it's a rather tepid broth.

Superman, who after a big blow-out in his own comics has decided that the world does need a team like the League, is the new leader, giving the book its first hint of nostalgic flavor. The rest of the members are carry-overs from the previous League, keeping continuity with the new League. But when you think about it, are Blue Beetle, Booster Gold, Fire & Ice, and Guy Gardner (!) the "world's greatest heroes?" Of course not. But they sell comic books.

Well, anyway, the cover depicts a nostalgic, old-style League scene—our superteam sitting around a game table, apparently under the control of the new baddie, the Weapons Master. From here on out though, the book is merely competent super-hero fare.

The Weapons Master is an unusually shallow villain, capable of pulling various weapons out of another dimension. He is in the employ of the Dominators, those guys with big teeth and dots on their heads from *Invasion* a couple of years back. There's a big fight that takes several pages, The Weapons Master wins, he zaps the

Peter Bagge's *Stupid Comics:* probably not good for you either, but very funny anyhow.

GIRLY-GIRL and CHUCKIE-BOY in "ROCE MODELS"
A R&R STUDIOS PRODUCTION BY PETER BAGGE
HELP! HERE WE ARE, BACK AT STALAG 13!
I WONDER WHO OUR COUNSELLOR WILL BE THIS YEAR?
WELCOME TO CAMP GIRLIE-CHUMIE

THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEROES ARE BACK!
JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA
61
JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA
BY DAN JURGENS & ROMEO BRIGGETT
THE ALL-NEW JLA... PAWNS OF THE WEAPONS MASTER!
JLI

Justice League of America: ". . .merely competent."

League to his other dimension, a mysterious hero called Bloodwynd shows up to threaten the the Weapons Master with Ghost Rider rhetoric ("Fell the blazing fury of those whose souls burn in hell," and all that), and then the Weapons Master challenges the Blue Beetle to a kind of chess game with figures of the Justice League as playing pieces, their lives hanging in the balance.

Most of this sounds very retrograde super-hero nostalgic with a few modern cliches thrown in, which it is. And it's okay, but the whole thing reads like warmed-over leftovers rather than vital new comics.

The characters are generally intact. It's good to see Beetle and Booster back together, but Jurgens has done a number on Ice. Under Giffen and Dematteis, she was a rather interesting, thoughful, if naive character. Here, she is at best a dumb schoolgirl, at worst a bimbo. When Superman crashes into the fray to beat up on Weapons Master, for example, she squeaks, "He's...so...BIG...and STRONG! I bet he can do ANYTHING!" Next thing you know, she'll want to feel his muscles on the beach. Didn't that go out with Dave Draper?

The artwork, like the rest of the sheebang, is merely competent. It's nice that the folks want to keep DC vitalized, but this is sort of like reading the DeFalco/Frenz *Thor*. If you want the old thing, read the old comics, which were great because they were new.

GRADE: ★ ★ ½ —*TK Dean*

X-MEN ANNUAL #1

Written by FABIAN NICIEZA; layouts by JIM LEE; art & inking by A MILLION PEOPLE; edited by BOB HARRAS. Published by MARVEL COMICS

As my last review for *Amazing Heroes*, I would like to use this forum not to review this particular comic so much as to comment on the X-Men and Marvel in general. Not much needs to be said about this annual. It's crap. It is incoherently written and drawn. There are 13—*13*—artists working on this book. How can anything decent come of such madness? And a zillion kids will buy it.

Marvel and the X-folks have taken a lot of the lumps over the years, including from myself. I was an avid Marvel fan back in the late '60s/early '70s, and I think mostly with good reason. I have stood by Marvel since then, watching its zeniths and nadirs (call me Uatu), and, right now, when Marvel—thanks in large part to its X-crap—is at an almost unprecedented height in terms of circulation, market share, and publicity, their product has never been so wretched.

There were barrelfuls of hoopla when Jim Lee and his clones came aboard the X-ship, more when Claremont took a leave of absence and John Byrne returned to the fold. People hailed the return to excellence, the return to comprehensible storylines, good art, and characterization. I will now speak blasphemy: NONE OF THAT IS TRUE! The storylines have become even *more* convoluted. Lee and his ilk are *terrible* artists—static pictures loaded down in a morass of incomprehensible detail. Characterization? It was obvious, from the interviews with him and from the scripts, that Byrne really didn't give a shit.

And now—after only a few short months of the "X" Renaissance, it's all fallen apart. Lee and company have moved on to create their own comics. Byrne has silently disappeared. We're left again with a listless, directionless collection of modern cliches—unimaginative powers, shallow characterizations, grimaces and guns—but that's exactly what we started with. Will someone please pick up the pieces? (There's a hopeful sign over in *X-Factor* with Peter David and Larry Stroman. It's the only X-book with any semblence of decent work.)

Can this really, truly, finally be the end of Marvel? Is all this spectacle of late really Rome burning? Is the stock market right? Has Marvel's new stock plunged because it's at a creative dead end, as reported recently?

Once upon a time, a group of nice fellows named Lee, Kirby, and Ditko took a moribund comics company and turned it into something approaching a true, innovative, creative force. Will history repeat itself, or will the mindless minions of Marvel keep on buying millions of multiple copies of this junk, supporting a creaking wreck that needs to be sunk? Keep the faith, friends.

GRADE: ★ —*TK Dean*

SANCTUARY #1

Written by SHO FUMIMURA; illustrated by RYOICHI IKEGAMI; translated by MATT THORN; edited by SATORU FUJII & JOHN TOGASHI. Published by VIZ PREMIERE COMICS

Ryoichi Ikegami has become one of the most popular manga artists with American fans, with his art for *Mai, the Psychic Girl* and *Crying Freeman*. Ikegami has been fortunate to work with strong writers. This trend continues with *Sanctuary*, where he is illustrating a powerful script by Sho Fumimura, better known to Americans as "Buronson," the author of *Fist of the North Star*. The photographically realistic art adds verisimilitude to this political thriller about the power brokers in modern Japan—the corrupt goverment ministers and the bosses of organized crime—and the two mysterious young men who are cutting themselves into this hidden elite.

This first issue focuses upon Akira Hoju, an energetic lieutenant in one of the most powerful Yazuka gangs. He's suave, sophisticated, handsome, so careful he has no police record, and he runs the gang's illegal gambling halls in Tokyo's posh Roppongi district. He's raking in the money for his Yazuka overlords, which makes them happy, and he's a popular one-of-the-guys commander of the gang's street soldiers. At the same time, Hojo is working on a personal plot to blackmail a leading member of the government, Dietman Sakura.

Sakura has a talented young private secretary, Asami, who appears to Hojo's counterpart within the legitimate power structure. He's a rising party worker who is learning all the tricks of wheeling and dealing, legal and otherwise, among the politicians and the bureaucrats. What nobody knows is that Hojo and Asami, who seem to be rivals, are secretly friends who are helping each other to get ahead.

The story is cryptic so far as their goals, but their cover slogan ("two men struggle to change the face of the nation!") implies that they have a more idealistic and dramatic purpose than making themselves the new kingpins for their personal profit. This mystery adds a unique aspect to what is already a well-crafted drama of power manipulation within Japan's underworld—*The Godfather* with an oriental twist, as it were.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ½ —*Fred Patten*

PETER CANNON THUNDERBOLT #1

Written and pencilled by MIKE COLLINS; inked by JOSE MARZAN JR.; edited by PAUL KUPPERBERG. Published by DC COMICS

I hate it when a comic book lets me down. Here I was ready to just love *Peter Cannon Thunderbolt* and it just didn't happen. This is not to say it isn't a good comic book; it just didn't live up to my expectations.

The art is quite good. In fact, it may be the best part of the book. I have always been a fan of realistic drawing over stylish, which is why Neal Adams beats Steve Ditko every time, but that's a different story. The major problem here is the story.

The first problem is that we're jumping through not just one or two, but *four* different time periods. This in and of itself is not too much to handle for longtime comics readers, but anyone new to comics picking up this all-important first issue will undoubtedly be lost.

Another problem is Peter's reason for quitting in the first place. Being beaten by a superior foe and then traumatized because he *failed*! Come on, this happens in every single comic book! Example Plot: Villain commits crime; Hero shows up; Villain beats the snot out of the Hero and gets away; Hero whines a bit gets up and hunts down Villain; Hero beats the snot out of the Villain; The End. Tell me if this isn't almost every issue of *Spider-man*.

Unfortunately, there are still more problems. For example if Cario De-Fray doesn't turn out to be Queen Evila I'll eat my hat. I'm sorry, Mike, but your sub-plots need a bit more subtlety. The part that really let me down, however, was that it was too short. By the time all the background and origin had been established, the hero only had time to crash through the window before the story was over. It left me with the feeling, "Is this it?" This is definitely one of those times where a double-sized issue would have been appropriate.

This is not to say that the book is without its good points I liked seeing Green Lantern make an appearance; it shows a good contrast between the two types of heroes. I also liked the Eastern religion influences. I don't know if this was originally part of Thunderbolt's origin, but it's well

Ryoichi Ikegami's photo-realism, as seen in the Japanese political thriller *Sanctuary*.

thought out and somewhat different from typical super-hero origins. But the all-out best part was the Jonny Quest line. It got a good laugh from me.

The series has potential, and I think given a few issues to get a handle on the character, it will lose most, if not all, of the flaws and be one of the best new series of '92.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ —Andrew Herrington

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF FELIX THE CAT #1

By JOE ORIOLO AND OTHERS. Published by FELIX COMICS

When I first heard that Felix the Cat was going to be revived for a new comic series, I feared for the worst—that the original series' surreal charm would be dumped in favor of a darker, more realistic Felix for the '90s. So the good news about this series is that Felix still looks the same. The bad news is the character has been neutered into a dull, politically correct pussy.

In this issue's first story, Felix goes fishing. He's having a great time; he's caught a bucketful of fish, which really annoys the big fish, who decides to get revenge on him. So they yank Felix into the sea, surround him, and herd him to the Queen of the Deep. Now, the old Felix would have figured a way to escape, have a wacky adventure with the fish chasing him, then learn his lesson and most likely release the fish he's caught. But this new Felix goes along with the fish to see the Queen. She gives him a lectures on the importance of conserving the planet's resources, then Felix goes back to his boat, dumps the fish back into the sea, and goes home to cook up a big bowl of spinach for Inky and Winky (formerly Dinky)'s dinner.

And the book's second story continues to display Felix's newfound sense of responsibility, as he makes his nephews do their homework instead of letting them play video games. This sure isn't the shit-disturbing cat that we've all come to know and love!

The interesting thing about this new Felix series is that one of the book's creators is Don Oriolo, son of Joe Oriolo, who did the later run of Felix cartoons (the ones with "Felix the Cat/The Wonderful, Wonderful Cat . . ." theme song). And, like the elder Oriolo's cartoons, *The New Adventures of Felix the Cat* is quite obviously aimed at young children, though it's much more didactic than the cartoons ever were. There's nothing wrong with this; it's always nice to see someone producing new comics for kids. But older and long-time fans of Felix won't be missing much here if they just stick with the Harvey reprints of the funny stuff.

GRADE: ★ ★ —Leonard S Wong

DR. RADIUM AND THE GIZMOS OF BOOLA-BOOLA

By SCOTT SAAVEDRA; edited by DAN VADO. Published by SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS

Dr. Radium and the gang are back in this all-new 48-page one-shot!

If you're a fan of the character, that's probably all you need in the way of a review. But for those unfamiliar with the series, Dr. Radium lives in a quirky Jetson-esque future, where he's the world's last scientist. He's assisted in his scientific explorations by Rez, a little floating cube; and Roy, his human guinea pig/helper. Also living with the trio is Penny, a woman from our era (more or less) who's been pulled into the future via one of Dr. Radium's experiments.

The story begins with Penny deciding that the group should go on vacation, and after a bit of persuasion, Dr. Radium and Co. go to the Hall of Travel to pick their holiday destination. Penny chooses the trip to Boola-Boola, "a primitive land" with no science. The group gets stuck on the island when the vacation pod returns home without them, and they have to adapt to their new surroundings. Eventually, they encounter the Island's natives—sentient household appliances—who worship Roy as the King of the Gizmos, which results in even more wackiness.

This is fun stuff. Saavedra's art is very cartoony. His characters aren't overly exaggerated, though; everything's grounded to some sense of reality. And his world of tomorrow has a playful, retro-future feel to it, with all its awkward, boxy buildings and overly complicated devices of the future (with names like "shower-tron," "clothe-u-later," and "hike-o-matic"). Special attention must also be made of the loads of neatly applied zipatone Saavedra uses on every page of the story, to produce shadows and backgrounds and clothes.

The writing, like the artwork, displays the fun Saavedra's having with this series. He has a clear sense of who these characters are, and successfully establishes their personalities for us through their actions and dialogue. Though there's nothing really new or innovative about this story's basic plot, the characters' antics propel it along in a very entertaining, laugh-out-loud manner.

It might take a bit of searching to find a copy of this book (I didn't know it was out until I got my review copy), but it's worth it for anyone tired of reading comics that aren't intentionally funny.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ —Leonard S Wong

PREVIEW

COOL WORLD and BEBE'S KIDS

To be released by PARAMOUNT

Theatrical animation is back in style to a greater degree than ever before. Paramount Pictures, which has not had a theatrical cartoon feature since the Fleischers' *Mr. Bug Goes to Town* [also known as *Hoppity Goes to Town—TH*] in 1941, has *two* cartoon features due out in July.

July 1st is the release date for Ralph Bakshi & Frank Mansuco, Jr.'s *Cool World*, a *Roger Rabbit*-esque combination of live action and animation. Jack Deebs (Gabriel Byrne) is a cartoonist who thinks he has gone crazy when he finds himself inside the world of his own cartoon characters. But he discovers that this is a real dimension which he was subconsciously tapping into for his inspiration. The filmmakers give the public what it expects from a Bakshi movie. The "real-life" characters of Sweet Town may be cute, old-fashioned fluffy bunnies and derby-wearing spiders, but they act like modern, vicious street punks.

Cool World boasts a $26,000,000 budget and special surrealistic sets to help the illusion that Jack Deebs and tough-guy cop Frank Harris (Brad Pitt) are three-dimensional humans living in a genuine two-dimensional world. Jack is suddenly helped in his attempt to escape by luscious Holli Would. Is she trying to seduce him for selfish reasons (a "doodle who has sex with a human will become human herself), or does she really love him?

July 30th will see the release of *Bebe's Kids*, produced by Reginald and Warrington Hudlin, Tom Wilhite, and Willard Carroll. This was originally planned as a live action feature to star black stand-up comedian Robin Harris in a dramatization of his most popular night club routine. But Harris suddenly died of a heart attack while performing. The Hudlins wanted to complete the movie as a tribute to him, but they felt that to cast any other actor would take the movie away from Harris' memory. The solution: to make it a cartoon feature starring an animated Harris.

Bebe's Kids is designed for all audiences, but it emphasizes the lifestyles of the African-American community. Robin, the narrator, is a snappy dude who hopes to make it with a beautiful widow, but she wants him to take her well-behaved boy to a thinly disguised Disneyland. Somehow, neighbor Bebe's three bratty kids include themselves in on the trip, and Robin finds that he has no time alone with Jamika due to having to try to keep Bebe's kids from demolishing the park. *Bebe's Kids* is being produced for Paramount by Hyperion Entertainment, the animation studio that made *The Brave Little Toaster* and *Rover Dangerfield*.

—Fred Patten

Holli Would and cartoonist Jack Deebs (Gabriel Byrne) from Ralph Bakshi's *Cool World*.

STRIP REVIEW

THE NUTHEADS

By DON MARTIN. Syndicated by DON MARTIN & SYNDICATE

The sales presentation for Don Martin's new strip *The Nutheads* includes an example of his *Mad* and *Cracked* magazine work. It's a typically mind-boggling gag in which Jacques Cousteau discovers what's under those Easter Island heads. Unfortunately, it's funnier than practically anything in the *Nutheads* strip itself.

The Nutheads is as uninspired as its title suggests. In an attempt to fit the smaller, more frequent newspaper format, Martin has introduced recurring characters (The Nuthead family and their in-laws, the Glumps) and continuity (The Nutheads live with the Glumps and work at their store, Glumps's Market). But the characters are so generic (Nutley, the father is stupid, the Glumps are grumpy, Nutley's dog is the smartest one in the family, etc.) and the continuity so purposely weak (for the sake of a gag, Glump's Market can be a grocery store, a hat shop, or a marriage counseling center) that they only slow down the gags.

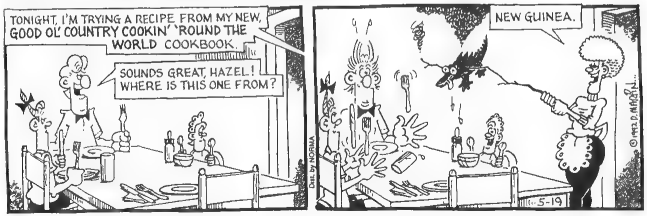
And the gags, exiled from the big magazine pages that allow Martin the time and space to set up his bizarre visual puns, seem weak and forced. "Well, it looks like a long night here at Glump's market, Nutley," says Hazel. The next panel reveals a ten-foot tall "knight" walking the aisles.

But *The Nutheads* is a new strip, and it deserves a chance. I'd like to think that Martin has given himself such a wide field so that he can experiment with different ideas until he finds out what kind of strip he's best at. I think he'll start leaning towards the wacky gags and phase out the domestic comedy, but you never know. In one sequence, he actually comes up with a new and funny twist on the old baseball-through-the-window routine.

But—ugh!—does he have to call it as something as hackneyed as *The Nutheads*? (The strip has also been known by the even worse name of *The Chuckleheads*.) Maybe there'd be some copyright problems with Warner Communications, which owns his original *Mad* magazine work, but I think *The Fonebones* would be a more likely name to win the hearts and minds of America.

GRADE: ★ ★ ½ —Thomas Harrington

A sample of Don Martin's domestic comedy strip, *The Nutheads*.


TONIGHT, I'M TRYING A RECIPE FROM MY NEW, GOOD OL' COUNTRY COOKIN' 'ROUND THE WORLD COOKBOOK.
SOUNDS GREAT, HAZEL! WHERE IS THIS ONE FROM?
NEW GUINEA.
DAN MARTIN
5-19

DISNEY

THE MOUSE FACTORY

by T.M. Maple

WALT DISNEY'S UNCLE SCROOGE #267

Written by MARCO ROTA, GARY GABNER, and CARL BARKS; illustrated by MARCO ROTA and CARL BARKS; edited by BOB FOSTER

WALT DISNEY'S DONALD DUCK ADVENTURES #25

Written by "UNKNOWN," GARY GABNER, and DAVE ANGUS; illustrated by DANIEL BRANCA, SANTANICH, and VICAR; edited by BOB FOSTER

DISNEY'S THE LITTLE MERMAID #4

Written by PETER DAVID; pencilled by BILL FUGATE, TOM BANCROFT, and JACKSON GUICE; inked by DAVE HUNT, IAN AKIN, and GARY MARTIN; edited by DAVID SEIDMAN

WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES #572

Written by CARL BARKS, BOB FOSTER, and BILL WALSH; illustrated by CARL BARKS, HARVEY EISENBERG, JAIME DIAZ, FLOYD GOTTFREDSON, and DICK MOORES; edited by BOB FOSTER

All published by WALT DISNEY MAGAZINE PUBLISHING GROUP, INC. (Whew!)

All in all, this issue is a good example of the new/old mix provided by Disney.

This issue also contains one of the nine parts of the Duckburg map that was feaured in three Duck titles over three months. This is a nice little gimmick. I wonder if there are plans to issue the full map as a poster. It would seem to be a good idea.

The accompanying contest, in which entrants can win original newspaper art, is also pleasing. However, what is *not* pleasing is that the contest is open only to United States residents. There may be legal or administrative reasons for this, but it must be frustrating for duck fans outside the U.S. not to be able to participate. (Now I'll *never* get the electrostatic stickers given out to all contest winners!)

GRADE: ★ ★ ★

Uncle Scrooge #267 opens with the second half of "The Money Ocean," in which his plan to stash all of his money in one big money bin runs afoul of the evil Magicia de Spell, who has placed a curse on his money, turning it into a dangerous, stormy ocean. (Hmm, did you notice that I used the word "money" *four* times in that opening sentence? How appropriate.) Naturally, Scrooge eventually triumphs, with nephew Donald Duck doing most of the dangerous work (naturally).

Things get a little weird even for Scrooge, but in general, writer/artist Marco Rota provides a pleasant excursion with some snappy antics and clever asides. One plot aspect I enjoyed was that Gyro Gearloose used science to battle de Spell's magic. It even made sense within the context of the story (sort of).

In the second story, "The Sceptre of Doom," we see the true Duck Master Carl Barks at work. He can really cram a lot into just ten pages of story, and the reader's enjoyment suffers very little for it. (Still, one can't help wishing that he had more room to work with. But then, that might ruin the effect, I guess.) This story produces a couple of outright chuckles, something not accomplished by the lead feature. What can one say about the deservedly praised Barks? This tale is not a masterpiece, but it's sure worth the read.

The one thing that "A Sense of Humor," the lead story in *Donald Duck Adventures* #25, does well is to show how insufferable practical jokers can be. (Sadly, in real life such people seldom get the comeuppance that Donald receives here.) However, beyond that it is basically a one joke story, and it's not a very good joke at that. (Donald picks the wrong guy to victimize with his jokes. Har har.)

Things get a little better in "The Moose Club," as Donald tries to win membership in that exclusive organization. But you just *know* that Donald's new neighbor, who is shabbily victimized by our hero, will turn out to be the wrong guy to pick on (do I detect a trend here?), as he is eventually revealed to be the top moose at the club.

And why do the moose heads worn by the club members look more like pig heads (or *something* non-moosish, anyway) with antlers (little tiny antlers) on them? Okay, so I'm being picky. But the story was not diverting enough to turn my mind away from such tangential considerations.

The best story in this issue (though that's not being overly complimentary) is saved for last, as in "The Golden Bunny," Donald looks for a Prize Bunny (don't ask) and of course encounters various cases of mistaken identity along the way. Still, "Writer Unknown" (I thought the vaunted Disney organization kept better records than that!) does manage to build in a few (mildly) surprising twists and some funny run-ins. The intended sweet, happy ending (in which Daisy gets the prize despite Donald's failure to acquire it, and ends up thanking him for it anyway) doesn't quite work for me. It's just an attempt to get a sweet, happy ending, not a natural result of the story itself.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★

Unlike Peter David, I was more impressed with the movie *Beauty and the Beast* than I was with *The Little Mermaid*, but perhaps that was because I saw the former on the big screen, but only experienced the latter via video. Still, I feel that *The Little Mermaid* is a "richer" concept and thus a better basis on which to develop a comic book series. David utilizes this potential (and his often expressed love of the movie) to good effect in *The Little Mermaid* #4, the final issue of the limited series.

The longest story in the issue, "The Hunt for the Redhead Down Under," is also by far the best—a little gem. David ties everything together very nicely, as Ariel is hunted by a determined scientist, Thelonius Paxx, in his newly invented submarine.

Through force of habit, I almost referred to Paxx as a "mad scientist"—such is the strength of the cliche. But one of David's strengths here is to portray Paxx as a believable and interesting character. He is an adversary for Ariel, but far from a typically superficially minded bad guy. Paxx is aggressive, egotistical, and somewhat insensitive, but he also has his good points: He's determined, confident, and focused on his mission —if you know what I mean. Anyway, suffice to say that in the end, both Ariel and Paxx come through with flying (or swimming) colors.

David expertly evokes the atmosphere of the movie while still giving us fresh excitement and humor.

The back-up stories do not fare as well.

The two-page "Hair Today" is kind of cute, but not much more. (But then, it features Ursula, who I felt was the weakest part of the movie, so I can't place the blame entirely at David's doorstep.)

"Clam Casino" is better, but it had a basic conceptual difficulty that spoiled it for me. Sebastian and his colleagues find a sunken treasure, and they invent a gambling casino to distribute the money, but soon fall prey to the evils that riches engender. However, they didn't seem to know anything about money (for instance, they refer to the coins as "shiny yellow things"), yet they invent a gambling operation to spread it around, thus using it as, well, as *money* (sort of). It seems a bit too coincidental to me. But then, money is a basic instinct, isn't it? (Hmmm . . .)

The ending, in which a nun (and a needy nun at that, is seems), gets the treasure, seems rather forced, i.e. another attempt at a sweet, happy conclusion. Still, David (mostly) saves the day with a nicely ironic final panel. (Poor Sebastian; he doesn't seem to get much respect from anyone, does he?)

This is a delightful issue, sure to be appealing to Little Mermaid fans—and to comics fans in general. I look forward to the announced Sebastian two-issue limited series (assuming that David is writing it), but even more I would look forward to another series for the redheaded Ariel.

(And this issue even had a lettercol. Nice touch.)

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ½

The chief (and cover featured) attraction to *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* #572 is Barks' "April Fools," in which Huey, Dewey, and Louie attempt to put one over on their old uncle. However, predictably, it backfires and they find themselves on a long-distance quest with Donald. Barks expertly shows us the plight of H, D, and L, jokers so deeply enmeshed in their own petty plans that they are trapped.

Things degenerate somewhat when the foursome reaches its destination, as only a few mildly funny mishaps ensue. And even Barks is bitten by the bug of reaching for that sweet, happy ending. It almost works for me, but not quite. (Is this an epidemic or am I just a sourpuss these days?)

Next we get "A Goofy Look at Money," which is surprisingly technical (joke—sort of), but relies too much on the one note "sticks and stones as money" idea.

Brick-eating termites are the basis of a tale featuring the Li'l Bad Wolf (and the three pigs, right?) Beyond this odd concept things pretty much grind away predictably like clockwork to the inevitable conclusion.

The dynamic mouse with the wimpy face fares rather better in the concluding chapter of "Mickey Mouse and the 'Lectro Box." The fact that we can't actually *hear* that wimpy voice in this story (except incessantly in our minds, like a curse) helps Mr. Mouse seem all the more dynamic, an impression aided by the crisp art by Gottfredson and Moores. The storyline has its moment too, as Mickey battles the "Aberzombies"—not a *lot* of moments and not very *big* moments, but it makes for a passable read.

This is more or less the fairly bland but semi-enjoyable side of the "Disney Magic."

GRADE: ★ ★ ½

It is perhaps fitting that the final comic book that I have reviewed here is one of the longest-running in existence. (*Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* debuted in 1940. According to *The Overstreet Price Guide*, its origins can be traced back to *Mickey Mouse Magazine*, which first appeared in 1935.) *Amazing Heroes* is one of the longest running fanzines (if I can call it that) in existence, certainly in terms of the number of issues and even with regards to the length of publication. However, *AH* will run no further, exist no more. Thus, in this, its final issue, it is somehow reassuring to be reminded of the enduring nature of comics in our society.

Amazing Heroes has done well. I don't know which I will miss the most, writing for it or reading it. I have been doing reviews for *AH* for over three and one half years now. (It seems longer. And I mean that in the *good* sense.) I have certainly enjoyed the experience and I would like to express my thanks to the two editors I have worked with, Chris McCubbin and Tom Harrington, as well as the other people in the Fantagraphics office who have had a hand in the process.

In all the reviews I have done for this publication (one hundred and twenty-three titles—I kept track), I had the pleasure to deal with just one book that I considered to be a true masterpiece: Timothy Truman's *Wilderness: Book 1*. But when you think about it, that's a pretty good batting average.

Paul Chadwick came extremely close to ranking beside Truman on my list with his absolutely wonderful collection *Concrete: The Complete Short Stories 1986-1989*.

Others that rank an honorable mention are three from "the big two," *Plastic Forks*, the *Hawkworld* limited series, and *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*, plus a trio from Eclipse, consisting of *Real War Stories*, *Miracleman*, and Scott McCloud's *Zot!*. (And if I had ever been assigned *Tales of the Beanworld* then Larry Marder and his creation would definitely be on this list. Which of course, they are now, sort of. On my list, that is. Because it's my column and I can do things like that, editor willing.)

And it is my *last* column, which is why I wanted to end by bringing to your mind thoughts of the incredible comic books named above. After all, reviews (and reviewers!) can be interesting, informative, and (yes) even wonderful, but in the final analysis, it's the comic books themselves that really matter.

From "The Hunt for the Redhead Down Under," by Peter David—a little gem in *The Little Mermaid* #4.

FANZINES

WIZARD: PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE FAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

by Jason Sacks

COMICS INTERVIEW #106
Edited by DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT. Published by FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD.

THE COMICS JOURNAL #148
Edited by GARY GROTH. Published by FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, INC.

COMICS SCENE #26
Edited by DAVID McDONNELL. Published by STARLOG COMMUNICATIONS

WIZARD #8
Edited by PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL. Published by GAREB SHAMUS ENTERPRISES, INC.

Now that *Amazing Heroes* has bit the dust—or at least is going on hiatus for a while—this seems like a good time to look at the other comics magazines on the market. All of them differ from *Amazing Heroes* by presenting their own unique viewpoint on the comics field.

The Comics Journal may be the most influential magazine in the history of comics. The *Journal* is often called a negative magazine, and those who don't look at the magazine often claim the *Journal* "hates" comics. I disagree with that criticism. It's true that editor Gary Groth and his staff dislike most mainstream super-hero comics. But that dislike of the most popular comics is only one small part of the *Journal*'s approach to the medium.

In a great many ways, the impact of *The Comics Journal* on the comics field has been very positive. For instance, how many magazines have spawned their own thriving line of comics? The first real Fantagraphics comic was *Love & Rockets*, which Groth "discovered" in the pages of the *Journal* #67, over ten years ago. *L&R*, of course, has turned out to be one of the finest and most critically acclaimed comics of the '80s. Other world class cartoonists that Groth and company have "discovered" include Chester Brown, Peter Bagge, Harvey Pekar, and yes, even Frank Miller. Myself, I'll always be in the *Journal*'s debt for its introducing me to the work of R. Crumb.

What's most significant about *The Comics Journal*, though, is that it's brought a scholarly aesthetic to comics that didn't exist before. Comics were once thought of as disposable trash. The *Journal* has made the point, again and again, that comics are a true art form. The editorial line has always held that comics have the potential to be as literary and beautiful and powerful to adults as any movie, book, or play. This sounds absurd when talking about *Spider-Man*, but much less absurd when talking about *Maus* or the new Catalan album.

The *Journal* has been somewhat uneven in its presentation in recent years. Now that the mountain has been climbed and comics are considered more and more as acceptable for adults to read, the *Journal* has seemed somehow less essential reading. For instance, the heart of the *Journal* has always been the reviews columns. One of the magazine's most cantankerous departments, the review column has featured the discoveries of Chester Brown and Peter Bagge, heaped praise on Jack Jackson and Frank Miller, and condemned Jim Starlin and Milo Manara. CJ #148, though, has a pretty mild review column. It features a negative review of a comics auction, a fine but perfunctory review of Dan Clowe's brilliant *Eightball*, and a positive but pointless look at two political cartoonists by Groth. Even Robert Fiore, perhaps the *Journal*'s finest reviewer, only reviews movies in issue #148.

To carry a bad analogy even further than it should go, if the review column is the heart of *The Comics Journal*, then the interview section is the brain of the magazine. *Journal* interviews have truly ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous—from Gary Groth's brilliant interviews with R. Crumb in issues #121 and 143 to John Byrne crucifying himself with his homophobia and a Jack Kirby interview in issue #134 that could have been definitive but lacked something significant. In *Journal* #148, the editors devote 32 pages to a Charles Burns interview by Darcy Sullivan. Now, Burns is a fine cartoonist and Sullivan asks the right questions, but the interview is just too long by half.

So the *Journal* in 1992 seems to me to be lacking just a bit of the spark that made it great. Perhaps now that the mountaintop has been reached, it's hard to decide which new summits to climb. Still, *The Comics Journal* is by far the best place to look for thought-provoking, interesting, and often infuriating chats about comics.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★

If you enjoy reading *Amazing Heroes* for the feature articles, *Comics Scene* might be a good magazine for you to check out. Issue #26 contains no less than 12 feature articles and interviews. Included are interviews with Neil Gaiman, M. Dalton Allred, Simon Bisley, and Alan Grant. Also, there are previews of *The Black Condor*, the new *Justice League*, *Aztec Ace*, and *The Madmen*. *Comics Scene* #26 also looks at comics-related TV series and movies like *Fish Police*, *the Human Target*, and *Beauty and the Beast*.

There is a lot of interesting material in here. For instance, Darcy Sullivan (him again)'s feature on Don Simpson and his career in comics really helped to explain the cartoonist's enigmatic career to me. An uncredited piece on Kevin Maguire is fun. And Drew Bittner's preview of the new *Justice League* is well-written hype.

My only real complaint about the magazine is that it lacks an editorial center. *Amazing Heroes* always prided itself on the high quality of its monthly columns like the news, "Coming Distractions," "Infernal Gall," and "Andy Mangel's Backstage."

Comics Scene seems to have only three regular columns: an editorial, a letters page and a very confusing list of comics-related properties that are being adapted for film or video. Editor David McDonnell could improve his magazine, in my opinion, by presenting columns by people with broad tastes in comics—people like *Amazing Heroes*' own Adam-Troy Castro, for instance.

Comics Scene boasts terrific production values. Full color and slick paper are presented throughout the magazine it features some fine feature articles that seem to be about a broad range of comics-related topics. The magazine could use just a little extra to make it great.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★

Wizard #8 is a very depressing magazine. It is in many ways the opposite of *The Comics Journal*. Rather than promote comics as an art form as the *Journal* does, *Wizard* looks at comics from a purely commercial standpoint, looking at just what is hot.

Issue #8, for instance, features hype about *Uncanny X-men* artist Whilce Portacio, Freddy Krueger and the Aliens. There are "hot picks" of the most collectible comics, silly games and a market watch feature that traces how well certain comics are doing. This is the column that breathlessly tells you that "Marvel's current crossover 'Galactic Storm' is selling pretty well but prices have yet to make any move." And that's about all *Wizard* does have to offer other than a couple of minor features on *Black Canary* and TV's Jimmy Olsen.

And one more thing—"The Wizard Price Guide." This is the sort of feature that really gets us fans of quality comics furious. Rating comics based on their cash values is the antithesis of what we *Comics Journal* readers believe comics should be about. This is a rating of crap over quality. Why else would *Alpha Flight* #106, perhaps the worst comics of the '90s so far, be worth $12 while most issues of Grant Morrison's brilliant *Doom Patrol* are worth about $3.

What I really don't understand is why a comic fan would want to spend $2.95 per month to see how their favorite issue of *Uncanny X-Men* is doing in an artificial market. The introduction to "The Wizard Price Guide" neglects to mention that only people willing to pay these prices will put this money in a reader's pocket. No comics shop owner in his right mind would pay $22 for a copy of *Uncanny X-Men* #201, and anyone who thinks they can get $22 for that mediocre book is plain wrong.

Wizard is a depressing magazine to those of us who love comics as an art. The magazines deserves half a star just for its fabulous production values. But *Wizard*'s aesthetic values are way off.

GRADE: ★ ½

Comics Interview is a very hit-or-miss magazine. My interest in a specific issue, like most readers, depends on the main feature of an issue. Issue #106, for instance, features an interview with writer/artist Ed Hannigan on his new DC miniséries *Skull and Bones*. Hannigan is an interesting interview subject, but I really wasn't that interested in what he had to say.

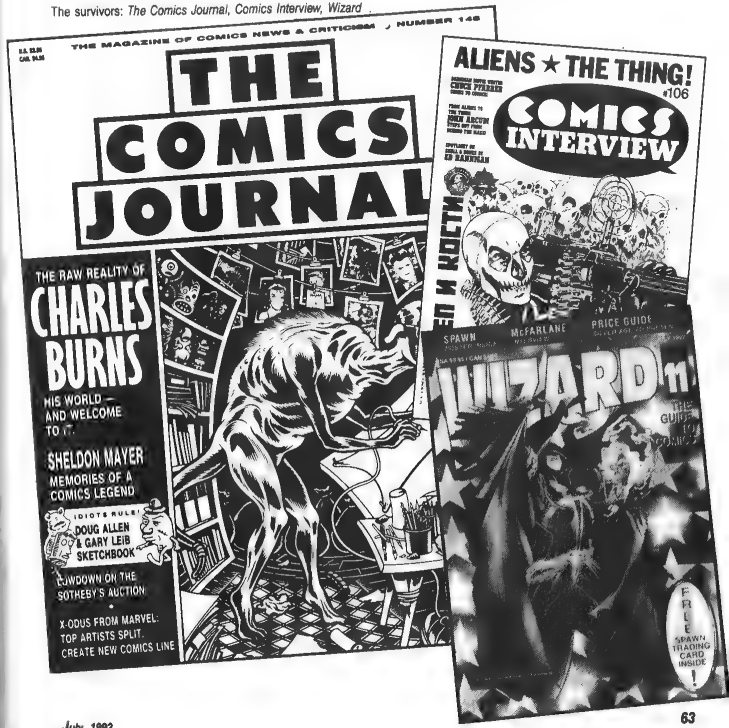
Issue #106 also features interviews with the writer and the artist of Dark Horse Comics' new *Thing from Another World* series. Again, both interviews are fairly well done, but just are not grabbers for those who are disinterested in the book.

The idea of a magazine that only features interviews with comics creators is obviously a good one. I'm looking forward to future interviews with Dave Sim and Art Spiegelman. But *CI* #106 just didn't have much for me.

GRADE: ★ ★

I'll really miss *Amazing Heroes* now that it's gone. I'm proud to have worked on the magazine, and think it really was the best magazine of its type on the market.

The survivors: *The Comics Journal*, *Comics Interview*, *Wizard*


THE MAGAZINE OF COMICS NEWS & CRITICISM / NUMBER 148
THE COMICS JOURNAL
THE RAW REALITY OF CHARLES BURNS
HIS WORLD — AND WELCOME TO IT.
SHELDON MAYER
MEMORIES OF A COMICS LEGEND
IDIOTS RULE!
DOUG ALLEN & GARY LEIB SKETCHBOOK
SHOWDOWN ON THE SOTHEBY'S AUCTION
X-ODUS FROM MARVEL: TOP ARTISTS SPLIT. CREATE NEW COMICS LINE
ALIENS ★ THE THING!
#106
COMICS INTERVIEW
SPAWN
McFARLANE
PRICE GUIDE
WIZARD
SPAWN TRADING CARD INSIDE!

DC

IN CASE YOU HAPPEN TO *READ* COMICS...

by Alex Chun

LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #30
Written and illustrated by MATT WAGNER

COOL WORLD #1
Written by MICHAEL EURY; pencilled by STEPHEN DeSTEFANO and CHUCK FIALA; inked by BILL WRAY; edited by PAUL KUPPERBERG

WONDER WOMAN SPECIAL #1
Written by WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS; ILLUSTRATED by PAUL SMITH; edited by ARCHIE GOODWIN

THE GOLDEN AGE
Written by JAMES ROBINSON; pencilled by PAUL SMITH

Since this is my final column, I thought I would use some space to ask one very important question: Does anybody read comics anymore? Considering the number of lousy books that still sell, my guess is the answer would be in the negative. The number of books being that are being carried by artwork these days is staggering, and for my buck (or $1.25 as of the recent hikes), splashy artwork is no longer enough. Rather than shelling out money for new books, I find myself buying reprints of older, more fulfilling material.

I have an idea. Why doesn't everybody just buy books that they plan to read, and maybe books will become more readable. I know this doesn't sound all that novel, but in a day of multiple covers and collector fever, it is.

Now let me also set a whole lot of ignorant people straight. No book that is published today will ever be worth more than the paper it's printed on. Think about this; how scarce is a book with a two million print run that everyone keeps sealed in boxes and bags? The reason that the older stuff has some value is is because everyone threw them away after they actually read them. (God forbid someone should put a crinkle in a spine of a book while rolling the cover back.) Now let me throw out a name that will bring a little tear to older collectors: *Howard the Duck* (soon to be replaced by *X-Men* #1). Maybe I have grown older, but instead of spending $10 a week on comics, I'm now hard pressed to spend ten buck a month. Maybe I'm a little more bitter and cynical as well, but I honestly believe the stuff on the stands is not as good as it was seven or eight years ago.

A good illustration of everything I've said is *Amazing Heroes*' forced hiatus by comic magazines that cater to speculators. It's a sad day when comic book buyers are more interested in the value of the books than the stories they tell, and it seems that is what comic book collecting has come to.

Sermon completed, it's now time for my last four reviews. It's been fun, and I hope that enough people voice their support (I'm assuming that people who buy *Amazing Heroes* actually read) to resurrect this publication.

In my previous column I voiced my confidence that Matt Wagner would come through with a conclusion to his "Faces" trilogy that would be worthy of the build-up. I was wrong. He came up with an ending that didn't even come up to par with the cliche ending I had anticipated: having Two-Face's fellow freaks turn on him.

Simply put—for a too-simple ending—Two-Face captures Batman, and Batman gets away; Two-Face captures Batman again, and Batman gets away—again—except this time he captures Two-Face and throws him back into Arkham.

Nothing is resolved concerning society's view of the congenitally disfigured, but rather the story perpetuates society's fear of the different. Wagner created a opening to dispel many of the stereotypes when he asks his cadre if they want to be isolated on the island he has secured from Paul Durberville, but the opportunity is interrupted by the climactic confrontation between Batman and Two-Face.

For a story that began with much mystery and intrigue, "Faces" concludes with little in the way of revelations. As I guessed last month, there was indeed something different about the femme fatale Manon and the fact that Durberville has two extra hands coming out of his torso came as no big surprise.

The book, however, did somewhat expose the shallowness that permeates our society. Wren blinded by Manon's beauty and Durberville's fear of being discovered are prime examples of the premium that people place on physical appearance, and these pitiful characters are left to wallow in their fate.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★

Welcome to Cool World. A world where the animated inhabitants are known as doodles and regular humans are known as noids. The only problem is you can't tell the noids from the doodles without a program.

Having seen the promo posters for the *Cool World* movie, I was very much looking forward to Ralph Bakshi's latest full-length animated film. Now after reading the first issue of DC's four-issue *Cool World* prequel miniseries, I'm not so sure.

Just about everything in *Cool World* is alive, from the doornobs to the tables. It's not real clear where or what Cool World is, but one man, Frank Harris, figures how to get there from Earth. I hate to make the comparison, but Cool World seems a lot like a *Roger Rabbit* rip-off. Among the similar elements are a human in a world of toons and a sultry cabaret singer/Jessica Rabbit clone, Holli Would. In addition, there's a little side story which involves two small time mobsters chasing after the ultimate weapon, a little black box that can wipe out any doodle. Sounds a lot like "dip" to me.

The other aspect of the "Cool World" that bothered me was that I never got the sense that this was a cartoon world. The artwork itself isn't inherently bad. In fact's it's quite competent. It's just that without a reference point, say a human drawn in a realistic manner, *Cool World* could've just as well been set on Earth with normal humans. In other words, the doodles don't look like doodles and the human looks like a doodle. (There is, however, a cool *Cool World* promo inside the book that shows how the art could've and should've appeared.)

The Bakshi cover, which is more cartoony than animated, is probably more along the lines of what is realistically possible for a monthly comic book, but even that gives a better feel of what Cool World is about.

GRADE: ★ ★ ½

Wonder Woman Special.

These days, I'm really starting to wonder what a "Special" is. I used to think "Special," as applied to comics, meant a self-contained story set a part from a title's regular series. Which brings me to my point: why does the *Wonder Woman Special* #1 exist?

I'm not saying that the book shouldn't exist. I'm saying that there is nothing "special" about it. Not only could this story have worked just as well as a regular book, but it even concludes in the regular *Wonder Woman* series.

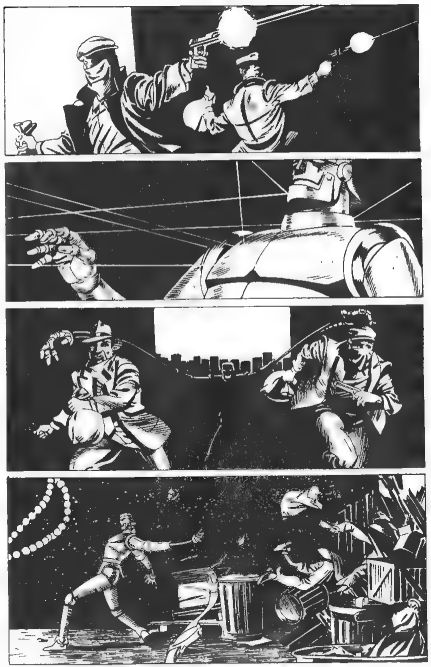
The book is really nothing more than an excuse to team up Wonder Woman with Deathstroke, and while this team-up is incredible to begin with, my disbelief actually increased as the story progressed.

The Cheetah gets captured in the Eastern European country of Balgravia, and for whatever reason, Wonder Woman decides that it's her duty to rescue her. To do so, she recruits the man she thinks is the most competent for the task—even if means compromising many of her principles. And during the rescue attempt to save one life, Cheetah's, Deathstroke takes 10 lives permanently. Let's see Wonder Woman, or Messner-Loebs, rationalize that.

In addition to the conflict between Deathstroke and Wonder Woman, the book also includes a mystical element. There is something unnatural about the men who have taken the Cheetah, but there is little to clue the reader in, and thus little to take an interest in. By the end of the book, I wasn't real anxious to run out and pick up *WW* #63, which concludes the story.

While the story had its holes, the art by Jill Thompson more than upholds the standards set by her predecessor George Perez. While I hate to pigeonhole a woman artist with a woman character, her style truly suits the book. My only hope now is that she gets some better material to work with.

GRADE: ★ ★



The Golden Age: an "Elseworlds" series, featuring Paul Smith art.

During the 1980s, one of my favorite artists was Paul Smith. He had significant stints on *X-Men* and *Doctor Strange* before he seemed to drop out of sight. Now he's back and working for DC on its first non-Batman "Elseworlds" book along with writer James Robinson.

I like the Elseworlds concept since the current timeline is filled to capacity, but like the aforementioned *Cool World*, *The Golden Age* has similarities to previously published books, most notably *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and the recently released *The Adventures of Captain America*. Also a four-issue prestige format series, *The Golden Age* os set in post-World War II America, and it explores the effect that not being able to participate in the war has on various Goiden Age heroes.

It's now the 1950s, and most of the pre-war heroes have faded into obscurity, ashamed that they were unable to participate in the war. Johnny Quick is now Johnny Chambers, film editor; Green Lantern is Alan Scott, newspaper editor; and others, such as Starman, are barely able to cope with their new status.

America's heroes stayed home for one reason, and his name was Parsifal. Parsifal, a German super-hero, had the power to negate the super-powers of others, and it was believed that the death of even a single American super-hero would be a devastating moral blow. So by presidential decree, no super-hero was to venture across the Atlantic.

But one did, and his name was Tex Thompson, The AmeriCommando. Prior to the war he was just a second rate costumed crime fighter, but after taking out Parsifal (even though the Allies were already marching on Berlin), he came home to accolades. Embraced by the public, Thompson sweeps America into the cold war and becomes obsessed with creating a new hero to defend America against the Red Menace.

While this first installment is interesting, I'm still a bit cautious after being burned by *Adventures of Captain America*. Like Kevin Maguire, Paul Smith's work is well suited to the task, and he draws really cool hair on his characters. The plot, however, lacks coherency, and the narrative is overdone at times. It's hard to get a feel for this many characters, and Robinson tends to jump around without fully exploring any one character.

The only really odd thing about the book is that I found myself very interested in what happened during the war: how the Green Lantern and Starman were almost killed by Parsifal and how America's heroes functioned while forced to stay home. If Robinson can bring this same level of intrigue to the story at hand, then he'll really be onto something.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★

"SERIOUS" ANIMALS

THE EVOLUTION OF 'MORPHS

by Fred Patten

ALBEDO VOLUME 2 #4
By STEVE GALLACCI. Published by ANTARCTIC PRESS

FURRLOUGH #1 & 2
By VARIOUS. Published by ANTARCTIC PRESS

"OMAHA" THE CAT DANCER #17
Written by KATE WORLEY; illustrated by REED WALLER. Published by KITCHEN SINK PRESS

SHANDA THE PANDA #1
Written by MIKE CURTIS; illustrated by MIKE SAGARA. Published by MU PRESS

ZU
By VARIOUS. Published by MU Press

RED SHETLAND #6
Written by RICHARD KONKLE; pencilled by TERRIE SMITH; inked by LAURA KAGAWA; edited by JIM GROAT. Published by GRAPHXPRESS

CHAMPION OF KATARA #1
By CHUCK MELVILLE. Published by MU PRESS

RHUDIPRRT, THE PRINCE OF FUR #7
Written by DWIGHT R. DECKER; pencilled by WILL FAUST. Published by MU PRESS

THE MEAN, GREEN, BONDO MACHINE
By MIKE KAZALEH. Published by MU PRESS

"Adult Funny Animal Comics" arguably go back to the Air Pirates' raunchy anti-Disney parodies in the early '70s; to Marvel's *Howard the Duck*; and to *Quack!* and *No Ducks!* in the late '70s. They didn't become established as a genre until the early '80s, when Steve Gallacci's *Albedo* and Reed Waller & Kate Worley's *"Omaha" the Cat Dancer* popularized the concept of anthropomorphized animal characters in mature situations. 'Morph comics have had their ups and downs since then. If they haven't become as popular as their biggest fans have hoped, neither have they faded into oblivion as their detractors have predicted. It looks like 'Morph comics will be with us as long as independent publishers last.

Steve Gallacci's *Albedo* introduced two of the most successful series in the genre in 1984: his own "Erma Felna of the E.D.F." and Stan Sakai's "Usagi Yojimbo." Usagi Yojimbo quickly spun off into his own title, which has just been reviewed in *AH*. *Albedo* ran for 14 issues under Gallacci's Thoughts & Images imprint, and has recently switched to Volume 2 under the Antarctic Press imprint.

Albedo is still dominated by Gallacci's "Erma Felna" serial, a s-f drama with heavy socio-political overtones. Readers were initially captivated by the incongruity of funny animal characters in hi-tech, interstellar battle action. Erma Felna is a young flight commander who made the right military decision in early issues. This brought her to the attention of conservative officers who do not believe that women should serve in command positions. For the last few issues, Erma has maintained a low profile as the story has focused upon scheming by factions both within the E.D.F. (space force) and the general Confederation government. Gallacci has also begun swinging away from Erma every few pages to briefly follow the progress of several supporting characters. In the two most recent issues, Erma has married, borne a cub, and must now balance maternity with her military career.

The story evolution has both advantages and disadvantages. It broadens the picture of this multi-species interstellar society, but it makes the plot seem less focused. It has traded dramatic action for talking heads. Many readers are still fascinated by Gallacci's attention to background details. Issue #4 includes eight pages of diagrams and operator-manual notes on one of E.D.F.'s armored vehicles.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ½

Albedo has inspired other military 'morph comics. *Furrlough* is an anthology title for such stories. The first issue has three short stories and four serials. The best are "Empires," by Chris Grant, Lance Rund, and Eric Elliott (futuristic war on frontier planets); "Ferea Bestiae" by Joe Rosales (a Roman troop on patrol along the Northern European borders); and "Deutsches Stosstrupen," by Ted Sheppard (a German-Russian war in the early 21st century with weaponry only slightly advanced over today's). These stories show a good knowledge of realistic military life. "At the Mercy of Love" by "Riley" is as decent comic book version of those movies about supercommandoes carrying out impossible raids. *Furrlough #2* has only three stories: the next installments of Sheppard and Riley's serials, and another adventure of Rosales' Romans. The quality of *Furrlough* is erratic—some of the best-written stories have the worst art, and vice versa—but overall the title is worth buying.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★

It seems ironic that "human interest" soap opera comic have not been able to survive with human characters, but still exist with 'morph casts. *"Omaha" The Cat Dancer* has become one of the most popular independent comics since it first appeared in 1981, not because of its graphic sexual scenes but because of its intelligent portrayal of adult characters in realistic situations. Sexuality of all types is not denied, but neither is it emphasized. *"Omaha" #17* is like Gallacci's "Erma Felna" in that the story stays with Omaha herself for only a few pages at a time, switching constantly to others such as her estranged boyfriend Chuck, his business associate Jerry, the police investigating Senator Bonner's murder, Omaha's crippled friend Shelley, and others. If this sounds cryptic to those who are not already *"Omaha"* devotees, that's the title's main drawback (which it shares with all long-running soap operas). But the previous issues have been reprinted in the *"Omaha"* album collections, so they are all still available.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Omaha," the Cat Dancer #17.

Shanda the Panda is the latest 'morph soap opera. Shanda Bruin is a young manager of a shopping mall multiplex movie theater. The first issue introduces her, her theater's busy staff, and the handsome raccoon who may become her steady boyfriend. It's a mixture of light romance and humorous behind-the-scenes expose of all the work that a movie theater staff has to do, so they can collapse, exhausted, while the public says, "Boy, I wished I worked in a movie theater! Getting paid to sit around and watch movies all day!" Cute cartoon art and likeable characters make this first issue a laid back pleasure.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ½

The 72-page *ZU* is a one-shot anthology of ten 'morph stories. Most are humorous, although the humor ranges from gentle to cynical. My favorites are Will Faust's "Vixy Vid," a parody of TV commercials ("Oh, dear! Little Bobby has rabies! And my bridge club will be here in 20 minutes!"); Tom Stazer's "Floppity Goes Berserk" (a fan of classic cartoon characters flips out when one of his favorites is revived and over-commercialized); and Dean Whitley's "The Itsy-Bitsy Teeny-Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini (Redux)" (the "wild takes" on the males on the beach grow increasingly exaggerated as a shapely girl walks by). Other contributors include Jay Shell, Roberta Gregory, Cathy Hill, Phil Yeh, Dan Steffan, Tracy Kazaleh, and Dean Graf & Terrie Smith.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★

Red Shetland began as a parody of Red Sonja in Marvel's *Conan the Barbarian*, but has become independent by being given a distinct personality. The current story began in issue #5 when Red and her companions Eon the warrior wizard and Byron the minstrel joined the aristocratic Lady Mizbich to find her kidnapped husband. In #6, Red is forced to fight zombies in a bar, and to wear a formal gown; and she's not sure which is more distasteful to her. More is revealed about Red's patron warrior-goddess, Mothra. *Red Shetland* is enjoyable, although it is still an uneven mixture of serious action and sophomoric humor.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★

Better-plotted humor is found in *The Champion of Katara*. Two "odd couple" funny animals from Pennsylvania, Lee and Nightwalker, are transported to a medieval land. Lee becomes bonded to a magic sword with which to battle monsters, combat evil, and perform the whole noble hero shtick. The macho Nightwalker figures that they can really kick ass and cash in on this, while the almost militantly pacifistic Lee refuses to go along with his schemes. In the first issue of this three-issue mini-series, Lee demands that they get back his car which Nightwalker traded to a peasant while Lee wasn't looking. The trail takes them from one village to another. On the way, they accidentally defeat a band of robber toad warriors. The humor in *The Champion of Katara* is reminiscent of the Crosby-Hope "Road" pictures.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ½

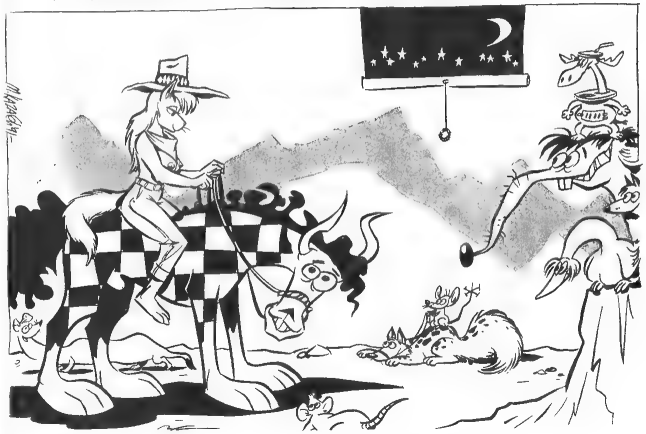
Rhudiprrt, the Prince of Fur is a step further along toward serious fantasy. An old man soldier, Warren Schafer, dies, and is reincarnated on a world of anthropomorphized cats as the insignificant young Prince Rhudiprrt, just as his kingdom is betrayed and invaded. Can Rhudi, with the wisdom of Warren, defeat treacherous warriors, corrupt noblemen, and evil wizards? Decker has stated that he is trying to write *Rhudiprrt* in the style of swashbuckling romances like *A Princess of Mars* and *The Prisoner of Zenda*. He is doing a good job of it.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ★

Mike Kazaleh's *The Mean, Green, Bondo Machine* is not a comic book as much as two dozen surrealistic, Dali-esque full page graphics. They really should have published in art-folio format, as separate prints suitable for framing. They depict Detroit-raised Kazaleh's interpretation of the inner psyche of the Southern California scene: The desert landscapes, the freeways, the backyard barbecues, the new & used car dealerships. "But what does it all mean?" I dunno, but it sure is spectacular to look at.

GRADE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

The Mean, Green, Bondo Machine: "Two dozen surrealistic, Dali-esque full page graphics."



Amazing READERS

Send your comments on AH or any comics-related topic to: Amazing Readers, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115

DONNA BARR
Bremerton, WA

Always a Pleasure to Hear from You, Ms. Barr

Dear Mr. Castro.

Well, if you're a writer in your own right, why are you SLUMMING? No confidence in yourself as a writer? Bad Company? Feelthy Lucre? Or, as Twain, Poe, and Rushdie, just ruction for the Hell and fun of it? (You *have* read Salman Rushdie's review of *The Wizard of Oz* in the May 1—the date is suggestive—*New Yorker*? No, I'm *not* making it up. Killingly funny. No, he DID. Honest.)

Are your comics available? Can we swap? No, I won't critique you—I may be haughty, hard-headed and snappish, but I am NOT arrogant enough to be a—a— CRITIC. (Euh.)

And who told you I was nice? Ooh, totally *cheeseless* liars!

(So you think concentration camps and date-rape are "charming"? You are one sick puppy.)

● *Oh, come on, Donna. I suppose if Adam called your comics "dramatic" and "serious" (and I'm sure he would) you'd claim he was referring to the time the Peach went surfing.* —*TH*

RICH MORRISSEY
Framingham, MA

Goodbye

I'm really sorry to hear about the passing of *Amazing Heroes*. Ironically enough, it comes at a time when professional or semi-professional magazines about comic books are proliferating, but the current trends are, if anything, more frustrating than they ever were.

Bob Hughes' insightful piece on comics and paperbacks helped one of your final issues to close out with some real substance. His research was impressive, despite omitting one little-known fact: DC was affiliated with a line of pulps, the extremely risque Trojan line including *Spicy Detective Stories* and Spicy Romance Stories. However, it was the antithesis of the situation at Street & Smith, where a prestigious line of pulps complemented a very minor line of comics books—Harry Donenfeld's pulp line was such a minor one, often the victim of community censorship, that he took quick advantage of the success of Superman and Batman and sank his resources into that branch, eventually folding the pulps altogether. "Newsline" continues to be insightful, with occasional errors—contrary to a few claims, Marvel isn't the first comic book publisher to have its stock publicly traded, as DC (or, as it was then called, National Periodical Publicatons, Inc.) was on the New York Stock Exchange for a few years in the mid-'60s. It ended up being completely acquired by Kinney National Services, a parking-lot company that was one of the major companies that have since merged to form Time Warner.

On the other hand, a few items badly need proofreaders, like the "Collection Robbed" item. There is no such comic book as *Adventures of Superboy* #300, and the first appearance of the Legion of Super-Heroes was in *Adventure Comics* #247. The missing comic book was probably *Adventure Comics* #300, featuring the first appearance of the Legion *in its own feature*, but this should have been corrected.

It's also rather sad to see myths that were thoroughly debunked when they first circulated still coming up again, like Michael Sutton's claim that The Human Torch was replaced by Herbie the Robot in the 1978 *Fantastic Four* series because the network was afraid kids would set themselves on fire. In fact, the Torch was missing because he had been separately optioned, for a pilot that, as far as I know, never aired.

Again, it's a great shame to see *Amazing Heroes* go, since I've been contributing to it almost from the beginning. I'll still be doing articles and interviews for what fanzines still exist, but, even if I'm not sure its own publisher thinks so, comic fandom will be far worse off without *Amazing Heroes* in it.

CHRIS KHALAF
Houston, TX

Goodbye

What a sad evening it is for me this night. I just watched Johnny Carson bid a tearful farewell to 30 years worth of fans, and now I'll soon be saying goodbye to *AH*. Certainly the adage is true: "all *good* things must come to an end."

I'm gonna miss you folks.

JONAH HORWITZ
Evanston, IL

A Free *Amazing Heroes* Subscription to the First Person to Explain this Letter to Us

The Replacements no more?! That's almost as bad as hearing Dave Sim's pretentious, excessive, egotistical banter. I'd take an Incredibly Intelligent Gorilla over a sadistic aardvark any day.

TIM BROWN
Welland, Ontario

This is Your Brain. This is Your Brain on Doritos

I just read some terrible news; according to Andy Mangels (p.59), *Amazing Heroes* is about to be cancelled. Yet in the newest *Advance Comics* catalog, they say you will be "on hiatus" for the summer, meaning possibly returning in Sept. or Oct. Which one's correct? I hope the latter but I fear the former is more accurate. If cancellation is imminent, then I would like to say that I will miss *AH* very much & have thoroughly enjoyed each issue I read. I wish the best of luck to all the people involved (Tom, Kim, Mark, Jason, Valerie, etc.) and all the columnists (Andy, Adam-Troy, T.M. Maple, Don Rosa, T.S. Wood, Dave Strom, etc.) and hope to see you all in another publication (perhaps a new mag about comics from Fantagraphics? I hope so. . .)

Alright, OK, enough gloom and doom! Here now is some more (possibly final) random thoughts:

—Do you see a crash at Marvel happening soon? I think I do.

—Do you think *Sandman* is one of the best damn comics of all time? I think I do.

—Do you think I eat too many Doritos chips? I think I do. (Well, my scale thinks so. . .)

—Hey! I just thought of something. Wait. . . sorry. I just lost it. (Yeah, I know it's a lame joke. Too much Doritos!)

—I agree with you about *Fish Police*. It stunk! here's hoping the new *Batman* cartoon will be watchable.

—Whatever happened to that painted Man-Thing graphic novel? Can anyone fill me in?

Well, I guess that's it. As usual, issue #201 was a great read (Dave Sim interview was the highlight). Until next time, Stay Amazing!!!

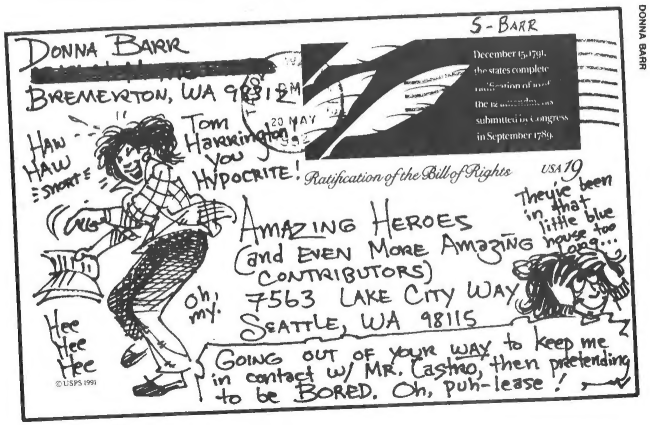
● *To explain: This definitely is the end of* Amazing Heroes *as we now know it. However, Gary and Kim are looking into reviving the mag in a different format, with a different focus. So while you will probably never see this particular version of* Amazing Heroes *again, you might see a new magazine with the* Amazing Heroes *logo in the near future. Will it be better? Worse? That's going to be your call.* —*TH*

DAVID MALCOLM PORTA
Sacramento, CA

I'm on a Mission From God

In *AH* #201, Adam-Troy Castro, in his hilarious column, "Infernal Gall," misspelled my name. Mal is Gaelic for servant, and Colm is a Gaelic form of the Latin Columba (dove), the saint who evangelized Scotland. It's Mal*colm*, as in Doveman.

Castro hyperbolized when he wrote of me that I specialize "in sending virulently bigoted and self-righteously


DONNA BARR
BREMERTON, WA 98312
S-BARR
December 15, 1791, the states complete ratification of and the Bill of Rights was submitted to Congress in September 1789.
Tom Harkin
You HYPOCRITE!
Ratification of the Bill of Rights
USA 19
HAW HAW
SHORT
AMAZING HEROES (and EVEN MORE AMAZING CONTRIBUTORS)
They've been in that little blue house too long...
Oh, my.
7563 LAKE CITY WAY SEATTLE, WA 98115
Hee Hee Hee
GOING OUT OF YOUR WAY to keep me in contact w/ MR. Castro, then pretending to be BORED. Oh, puh-lease!
©DSPS 1991

DONNA BARR

'Christian' rants to every mainstream comic which dares to suggest . . . that Gay people . . . deserve . . . consideration as human beings."

"*Every* mainstream comic"? I never read *Alpha Flight*'s !queer! story: it's not a book that appeals to my taste.

"Mainstream"? I write only to books I read, and I read fewer than ten titles a month (no Marvels, some DCs). During the past decade did books like *Zor!*, *Jonny Quest*, and *Ms. Tree* have truly *mainstream* commercial appeal? Hardly.

"Bigoted"? A bigot is one who *unreasonably* holds a stubborn, unyielding adherence to a conviction. There's nothing *unreasonable* about an unyielding adherence to truth: when a God who doesn't lie tells us "not to lie with a man as one lies with a woman: that it is detestable," it's reasonable to take that as truth.

"Self-righteously 'Christian' "? I'm a sinner. I have *no* righteousness in and of myself. The righteousness I proclaim is the righteousness of Jesus of Nazareth, the righteousness of God. Trust God, not Porta.

It's people who proclaim themselves righteous who are truly self-righteous (and truly frightening).

When Castro wrote that I could "assume that [he's] . . . 'homo' . . . because . . . righteous men . . . should . . . declare themselves," he was categorizing himself as righteous. *That* is self-righteousness.

"Human Beings"? Of course gay people deserve consideration as human beings. What doesn't deserve consideration, except to be rebuked, is the notion, or whim, that homosexual *behavior*, is anything but detestable, both aesthetically and morally.

When sin is called virtue, that is unreasoning giving voice to itself. That is bigotry at work. Adam-Troy Castro: Bigot.

● *Since our readers have already figured out that you might have used those five ellipses to quote Adam out of context, I'll reproduce for them what he actually said:*

"Incidentally, if Porta's reading this, and wants to assume that I'm what he would term a 'homo,' he can go right ahead. Because whatever their true religion might actually be, righteous men confronted by Nazis should loudly and repeatedly declare themselves Jewish."

Self-righteousness is defined as "smugly sure of one's righteousness," and if Adam is guilty of that, then you are doubly so. —*TH*

CYNTHIA FLUHARTY
South Pasadena, CA

Goodbye

While picking up #201, the owner of the shop said it was your "swan song." But he was too busy to explain, and as I read the issue I didn't see anything to back up what he said.

Until, that is, I got well into Andy Mangels' article.

So, you guys got axed? Why? Who? What? When? Where? Were sales that poor?

Man, this is the worst news I've gotten since—I don't know when—since the office sent me three new students, two of whom can't keep quiet and one who can't even write his own name without taking 15 minutes.

So what happens now? This news has depressed me. What am I supposed to read now, *Comics Journal? Comics Interview? CBG?*

AAARRRRGGGGHHHH!!!!

PETER IORILLO
Cleveland Heights, OH

Goodbye

Say it isn't so. Say it's just one of those cheap marketing gimmicks that are so prevalent in the comic industry today. I can't believe you're giving up the ghost. I've been with you guys since more or less (more) the beginning. I've been with you month after month (for a while there, twice a month) for over a decade. Sure, I missed a few issues here and there and I had to scour the bins and take advantage of your back issue service, but I've got every single issue including the previews and swimsuits. You guys fill up over a comic box and a half, but it's more than that. The thought-provoking ideas and viewpoints, the reviews the previews and the sense of fun month in and month out will be sorely missed by this guy in Cleveburgh.

I hope your hiatus is a short one. And just in case you're not back by Christmas "Notary Sojak!"

P.S. What odds is Strom giving on the return of *AH*?

TODD LOREN
San Diego, CA

Who's Ripping Off Whom

Andrew Herington made a blatantly incorrect statement in response to my last letter. He said I was "Ripping off celebrities (and) used trademarked logos . . . without paying for them. That is illegal . . . ." No it isn't, first of all because these bands are public figures, and secondly, because when a comicbook (one word, please) makes use of its First Amendment rights to report objectively on a subject, then the logo is an integral part of the telling of that story, and use of such logo for that purpose is perfectly legal. Just because comicbooks have rarely made use of these rights in the past doesn't mean it's illegal for them to do it!

STEVEN ROWE
Florence, SC

Popeye– Multiple Choice

A famous comic book artist who worked on Popeye cartoons?

Well, a famous *writer* would be Charles Biro (the Best(?) '40s & '50s comics writer), Carl Wessler (wrote my favortie EC stories).

But artists? Which one?! Jim (*Fox & Crow*) Davis, Warren Kremer, Otto Messmer, John Stanley, Sheldon Mayer, Jack Kirby (Is probably who you're looking for.)

Oddly, only Davis *drew* Popeye, the rest were In-betweeners or Inkers.

● *Your thorough answer qualifies you as the clear winner in this, our final (and maybe easiest) contest. Congratulations!* —*TH*

JASON COHEN
Austin, TX

Yet Again, Super-hero Songs

If we're still on the subject of comics in rock songs, how about a very recent entry from the new album by Tori Amos? "If you need me, me and Neil'll be hanging out with the DREAM KING. Neil says hi by the way," she sings on "Tear in Your Hand." And then there's Martin Phillips of the Chills, who, recalling lost love on "Don't Be Memory," recalls being "cozy in the Northwing/taking turns at Swamp Thing." And has anyone mentioned that the Pontiac Brothers cover "Magneto Meets Titanium Man"?

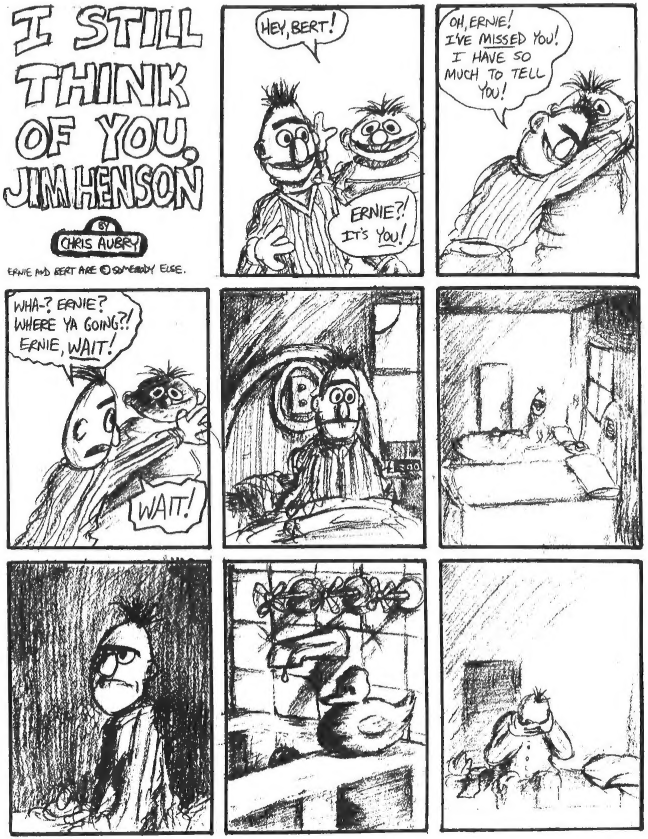
● *Hey, I might as well get my entry in. The album* Flood *by They Might Be Giants features "Particle Man," which takes its basic meter and inspiration from the theme to the* Spider-Man *cartoon show of the '60s. Particularly memorable is the opening, which goes: "Particle Man, Particle Man, do anything that a Particle can . . .".* —*TH*

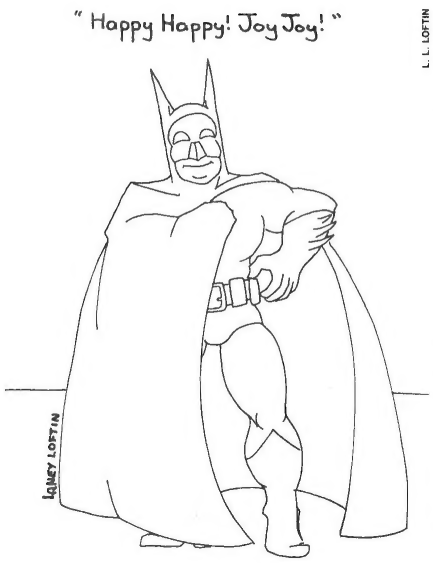
KEVIN M. MATHEWS
Singapore

Goodbye

I was deeply shocked and saddened to hear about *AH*'s impending demise. It's never going to be the same again. Where else can I get the same intelligent, reasonable, objective and downright accurate reporting about comics? (And who is going to print my *annoying* letters?) Please let me know what you guys plan to do after #203/204 and whether *AH* will be reincarnated into some other form.

In any case, thanks so much for making me the winner of *two* Letters Page Contests. And I just can't understand why I didn't get the Danny DeAngelo Award?! You think it's easy writing these *annoying* letters?


I STILL THINK OF YOU, JIM HENSON
BY CHRIS AUBRY
ERNIE AND BERT ARE © SOMEBODY ELSE.
HEY, BERT!
ERNIE?! IT'S YOU!
OH, ERNIE! I'VE MISSED YOU! I HAVE SO MUCH TO TELL YOU!
WHA-? ERNIE? WHERE YA GOING?! ERNIE, WAIT!
WAIT!



Anyhow, I'll still be writing to you guys until the bitter end.

About #201. The Dave Sim interview was. . . hmm. . . great! 15 years on and the man still amazes me. No cheap tricks, no gimmicks just his surprising and belligerent wit. His complete denial of conformity marks him as one of the medium's genuine geniuses. But hey, you guys already know that.

About DC's plans for '92/'93. Caught between Marvel and the upcoming Valiant/Dark Horse/Image threat, DC is in danger of losing greater points in their market share. So what do they do? Follow the leader. Family titles are in, it seems. Do we really need titles like *Team Titans, Legionnaires*, or *Shadow of the Bat*? If this trend continues, we're going to have another glut, that might lead to some form of market crash.

Just some things I've enjoyed since the last I wrote. King's X, *Legends of the Dark Knight* #29-30, Fugazi "13 Songs", local band The Oddfellows "Teenage Head", *Peepshow, Cerebus*.

P.S. Yes, Adam-Troy, I hated *Jihad* too!

LEROY GOMES
GB, WI

Wonder, Wonder

Your Wonder Woman retrospective in #197 was good, but it seemed to be missing a page, frankly. Did the original last, part of the article get heavily chopped in the editing stage?

You really didn't cover the period after Julius Schwartz took over the editing reins (1974) (Gods, I always wanted to use a term like "took over the editing reins," you know?) through 1986 in any detail at all, pretty much leaping straight from that to the Crisis-era discontinuation and the Trina mini-series pretty much instantly without even as much as a "How do you do?"

Really, during that time period, I believe WW switched back and forth "twixt eras" and approaches quite often—I was looking forward to getting a full guide to it, especially to a full listing of exactly how many Steve Trevor deaths/resurrections there were, anyway! Really—the world needs to know!

● *If the article seemed a little rushed at the end, it was because Richard Howell was finishing it while Federal Express was knock-knock-knockin' at his door. Richard had to write the piece on very short notice, and did a bang-up job under the circumstances. It was clearly the hit of the issue.* —*TH*

DENNIS MALLONEE
Long Beach, CA

Credit Where Credit is Due

Thanks for the wonderful article about the upcoming *Flare/Champions/Southern Knights* crossover. I'm sure it accomplished much in bringing the event to the attention of comic book fans.

Would it be possible in an upcoming issue to include a note giving credit where credit is due to artist Howard Simpson, who did the pencils for the pages George Perez inked. Howard was understandably very hurt to be ignored.

RICKY L. REN
Houston, TX

Toy BS

I am both a comic and toy collector, so when Toy Biz produced the X-Men action figures I was thrilled. I was very surprised and happy to see Storm included in this set, since Marvel Heroines have been largely ignored by toy companies.

Well, I knew it wouldn't last! Storm will be the last female X-Man produced. Why? Beacuse a bunch of seven-year olds won't buy them? What about the adult consumer who wants to see Psylocke, Rogue, Jean Grey and Dazzler added to this popular toy-line?! In the book, these ladies are *just as popular* as some of the men! C'mon Marvel and Toy Biz, even if the ladies are just mail order or direct market only, they'd still sell well. They're X-Men!

● *As a toy buyer myself I sympathize entirely. Unfortunately, Toy Biz believes in just one thing, and that's the bottom line, how much money they make. Just ask about the headaches Diamond Distributors had trying to get the Toy Biz figures into comic book stores. It may come as a shock to a lot of people, but the entire direct market system, which is approximately 80% of the comics sales nowadays is considered very small potatoes in the toy industry, and not worth the effort of even catering too. I find this extremely short-sighted because without the comics industry Toy Biz would have nothing to sell. Personally, I think the mail-order idea is a great one but probably impractical. But I have great hopes that I will get to see my two favorite Marvel females (Jean Grey and the Black Widow) in stores yet. Toy Biz lists not only an address, but a phone number right on the packages. So call or write and complain. I did.—Andrew Herington*

SUE HOLANIK
Chicago, IL
(but written in an obscure trailer park near Tampa, FL)

Goodbye

Hey! I was reading "Comics in Your Future" in *Comics Buyer's Guide* the other day, and I read that the next issue of *AH* will be the last! What th'? Now, I know my comics collect in six week piles, and I skim through bulky stuff like *CBG* for the good parts (so many ads); but this comes a s a real surprise. How did this come about? How could I be caught unawares? Who woulda thought it? Now I can't wait to get home and pore over the last issues for more information.

Please forgive the primitive presentation of this letter. It's being typed on a little bitty old Hermes Rocket with no numeral "1" or tabs. I also forgot typing paper and envelopes. (who types on vacation?) But I had to write before it was all too late, and tell you how much you'll be missed.

I've been a steady reader for maybe four or five years, and have enjoyed every issue. I can't think of another publication that could take the place of *AH*, based on format, content, style, and contributing artists and writers. Damn. Now what's a girl going to do?

I looked forward to to the letters column, often reading those first, getting to know the regulars pretty well. It was great, listening to everyone's comments, pro and con, on just about any subject. I'll really miss "Infernal Gall" and "Backstage"; those columns were always loaded with information, gossip, and commentary. Always a good read. And how will I plan my purchases without "Reviews"? Or "Coming Distractions?" And how will I get to know the artists with no faces without the interviews in "A Few Words?" I'm doomed. No more fascinating articles on any number of topics; no more "Strom's Index" or letters contests, or Don Rosa's covers (I liked those a bunch—reminded me of all those comics I bought in the '50s, read, enjoyed, and dumped); no more editorials or perspectives.

Rats.

Well, I hope I'm not sounding any premature death knells. Maybe I missed some bit of information telling us all that *AH* really isn't going away forever, just transmogrifying into some other entity. But if the end is nigh, then I extend my sincere thanks and best wishes to the staff and contributors, and tell you I'll keep my eyes peeled for your input in other publications.

Damn, damn, damn, again. (I'm real agitated, you can tell.) It's been so much fun. But ain't it always the way?

Notary Sojac.

● *I can't say how much your letter meant to me, Sue. Knowing that readers like you appreciate our efforts makes the whole experience very gratifying. We're going to miss you guys, too.* —*TH*

CHAS BERLIN
Memphis, TN

AH's Last Letter...

Could I interest anyone on the staff to possibly review the latest issue of *Heluva?* I very much appreciate the support for the last issue that Alex Chun reviewed (#193). Speaking for many alternative cartoonists, the *AH* review section lets us know we're alive and people may actually be reading our material!

● *Thanks. We did our best.* -*MT*-

AND NOW...THE ACADEMY AWARD WINNING DEATH SCENE OF THE CARTOONIST CAST!!!
by T.S. WOOD
OH GAG...THIS IS IT...
...YEAH--IT IS...
IT'S THE LAST ISSUE OF AMAZING HEROES!
AW...GASP... ANY LAST WORDS FOR... FOR... CHOKE...OUR READERS...?
YEAH...CHOKE... I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT WE NEVER...GASP... NEVER MADE FUN OF, OR BELITTLED, ABUSED, HUMILIATED, MOCKED OR RUINED THE CAREER OF ANYONE WE DIDN'T LIKE...
YEAH... GASP... EVEN THE X-MEN!
OOOH! GASP! I'M...I'M FADING... MY BUCKET IS KICKED... CHOKE... NO MORE TO TIPPY-TOE THROUGH THE TULIPS OF EXISTANCE... SKITTER... GASP... BUT... BUT BEFORE WE DIE, DEAR, BELOVED READERS... CHOKE... FIRST... FIRST I MUST SHARE A SECRET WITH YOU... GASP! CHOKE! AN OLD SECRET... ABOUT SILVER'S SCARF!
MY SCARF?! OH YEAH! THAT'S RIGHT! I FORGOT!
YEAH, SEE ~ DURING OUR FIRST YEAR HERE, TO THANK DWIGHT R. DECKER, FORMER A.H. COLUMNIST, FOR GETTING US THIS JOB, WE HID HIS NAME IN MY SCARF IN MOST OF OUR STRIPS! NUFF, EH?
SILVER...
YEAH, WOOD?
YOUR SWORD!
OH, YEAH... ...SORRY.
OOH! THE PAIN! THE AGONY!
DITTO!
YOU KNOW? CHANCES ARE THE READERS'LL READ ME BEFORE YOU GUYS THIS ISSUE, TOO!
OH SHUT UP, DAVE!
Well, Everybody ~ It's been FUN! Yours... T.S. WOOD BE HAPPY!

STROM'S INDEX

by Dave Strom

Number of Strom's Indexes in *Amazing Heroes*: 50

Issue number of the *Amazing Heroes* in which Arlene C.H. Fassett said "Number of issues 'Strom's Index' should continue to run: all of them": 184

Location of where I wrote the first Strom's Index: Printer's Inc. in Mountain View, over a cup of Cafe Mocha.

Steps taken to write subsequent columns:
1. Stand in a comic book shop Friday night, holding a clipboard.
2. Thumb through all the new comics.
3. Write phony statistics along with some real ones.
4. Much later, type the statistics into my computer.
5. Mail in a 9"x12" envelope.

Location of a rewrite of this column in particular: Printer's Inc, over another Cafe Mocha (a double) and mocha cake. Maximum mocha.

Rank of "potential discounts on comics," "no more questions about why I'm writing on the clipboard," and "I had to thumb through a lot of comics to get ideas" as to the main reasons I told comic book managers who I was if I shopped there regularly: 1,2,3

Number of times I wished I used a pocket computer to hack out the stats rather than writing them on the clipboard, since by the time I typed then into my home computer, I had trouble reading my own handwriting: 200

Main irritation of this column: reading comics off the rack and scribbling on a clipboard every Friday before I eat dinner

Main pleasure of this column: writing stats like the next three

Number of times Ed Anger—self-described "pig-biting mad" columnist of the Weekly World News—said that Northstar being gay will turn American boys into homosexuals: 2

And introduce them to AIDS: 1

Chances of Ed Anger being a redneck turning American boys into dangerously inbred bigots: 99 in 100

[DAMN, that felt GOOD!]

Items I wrote that were edited out (this happened very rarely), and the reason why:

the title "SEXIST STATISTIC OF THE MONTH"

[Tom thought the title wasn't supposed to be printed. This was a logical mistake. This item was just before the statistic, "Chances of Teri Wood being as cute in real life as Silver in "The Cartoonist": 1 in 2." Does anyone ever ask if male artists are as handsome as the super-heroes they draw?]

A reference to Mike Royko's book *Boss* (if you want to know why American cities hurt so much, read this book): lack of space. (I think. I didn't ask.)

Most unusual editing in the index:

In an early index, I wrote "sh-t" and "g-d damn." The editor changed them to "shit" and "god damn." In a much later index, I wrote "fart." The editor changed to to "f--t."

Number of writers fired from *The Comics Journal* for plagiarizing Pauline Kael (New York film critic): 1

Number of times I have been fired for copying the style of Harper's Index (to which this column has always been a homage): 0

Number of stats that Tom Harrington sent me (in my little SASE that I always anal-retentively included with my indexes) that I used: 8 approx

[I often wished I had thought of them first.]

Topics that I would have liked to have written an entire index about, but didn't and the reason why:

Religion: Would have tried to write one if *Amazing Heroes* had lasted

Magazines about comic books: Ditto

The Gulf War: Couldn't think of enough stats

The book *Unreliable Sources: a Guide to Detecting Bias in the News Media*: Ditto

Topics I would liked to have mentioned, but didn't:

The Peter David-John Byrne feud: It was in another magazine, so readers here probably wouldn't know about it, and John Byrne's writing already gave me plenty of material to use.

Gary Groth's sesquipedalian (look it up) bad-boy trashing of the sympathy letters in the *Comic Buyers Guide* for the late Carol Kalish: I caught wind of it too late, and it doesn't fit the subject of this index.

The Harlan Ellison—Gary Groth Feud: I did write some items pounding on Gary. However, the more I looked at them, the more I realized that I—a Harlan fan—was reacting like a dogmatic fanboy. Well, I'd like to think that was the real reason, and not BUCK, BUCK, BUCKAWWW!

Reason I stopped discussing upcoming stats in the index with other people:

I showed a professional I respect some stats about the Ellison—Groth feud, and he said he told friends about them, and then I never used them.

Ratio of the chance of Wood-Strom feud being real and Professional Wrestling being real: 1:1

"DAVE, what are you doing? Can't you keep in character for just one more column?"

[Oh, all right, Teri.]

Chances of the readers reading me first because I have such talent: 99 in 100

"Chances of Teri being talented enough to write AND draw in her feature: 99 in 100"

[Well, betcha I could draw if I put my mind to it. Bet I can do that little talking-name thing you do in "The Cartoonist." Just gimmie another letter "o" in my name, and . . .]

SOUND EFFECTS: Teri Laughing herself silly.

[Oh shut up, Teri!]

Chances of me trying to sell this column elsewhere: 1 in 2

To Teri Wood, Kevin Dooley, Chris McCubbin, Tom Harrington, Cynthia Fluharty (for all those letters), and to everyone else who enjoyed the Index and *Amazing Heroes*, Teri said it best: It's been fun!

AMAZING HEROES

WELL, THIS IS IT.

Amazing Heroes has gone on hiatus for the notice.

So, what are you going to do now for news, reviews, interviews, previews, etc.?

How about subscribing to—or just picking up a copy of—*The Comics Journal*? Admittedly, there are some differences with *AH*, but if you look over this convenient comparison chart, you will see the many parallels between the two magazines.

AMAZING HEROES	THE COMICS JOURNAL
Has Reviews	also has Reviews
Has Interviews	also has Interviews
Has Adam-Troy Castro	has R. Fiore
Has News	*AH* stole its news from here
Has Tom Harrington Editorials	has Gary Groth Editorials
Has Letters Column—featuring Donna Barr vs. Adam-Troy Castro	has Letters Column—featuring Gary Groth vs. R. Fiore
has cool articles like "Mr. Mxyzptlk Villain History"	has cool articles like "Charles Atlas and the Cold War"

Amazing, isn't it? It's like *The Comics Journal* is the Earth-2 version of *Amazing Heroes*!

THE COMICS JOURNAL
NEWS • INTERVIEWS • REVIEWS • INTERNATIONAL NEWS
"Hot Picks" • "Funnybook Roulette" • "No Comment"
"Swipe File" • Editorials • Contributors' Notes • Ads

Upcoming issues of *The Comics Journal*:

#151: DREW FRIEDMAN Interview—
The King of Ugly Plus "The Best Comics Shops in America"; and some never-before-seen Carl Barks cover sketches.

#152: "THE MAINSTREAM ISSUE"
To dissect the "Mainstream," featuring interviews with Todd McFarlane and Chris Claremont, among others.

#153: HARVEY KURTZMAN ISSUE:
The entire issue is dedicated to the famous comics pioneer. Interviews with Kurtzman & Jack Davis, a classic E.C. story reprinted, a preview of the new Two-Fisted Tales . . . more.

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